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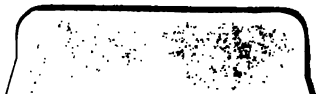
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1850

THE
HEART'S EASE;
OR,
A REMEDY AGAINST ALL TROUBLES:

WITH A
Consolatory Discourse,
PARTICULARLY DIRECTED
TO THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR FRIENDS
AND DEAR RELATIONS.

BY SYMON PATRICK, D. D.

"In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts
delight my soul."—*Psal'm xciv.* 19.

"Happiness lies in a very few things.—*M. Antoninus.*

OXFORD:
J. H. PARKER.
1837.

419.5.110.



Combe and Co. Printers, Leicester.

TO THE

HON. SIR WALTER ST. JOHN, BART.

AND THE

LADY JOHANNA ST. JOHN,

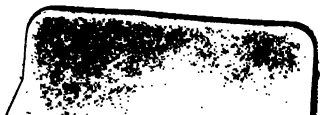
HIS WIFE;

THE AUTHOR WISHETH

ALL THE BLESSINGS OF THIS LIFE, AND THAT
WHICH IS TO COME.



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EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

THE first occasion of these meditations upon those words of our Saviour to his disciples, (John xiv. 1.) is known only to myself and another person whose contentment I exceedingly desired. But the occasion of their publication is known to more than yourselves, (for whose use they were first transcribed a good while ago) which I will not trouble the world so much as to take an account of. For it will believe (it's like) that it comes from my own proper motion and inclination to send them abroad; and the ordinary reason from the impor-

tunity of friends can be understood by none but those who know that a friend can do more with us than we ourselves.

But the reason why they address themselves to you, is known best to myself. For though you might know it if you pleased, yet your goodness teaches you to forget the many obligations you have laid upon me, which I ought always to remember. So many they are, that when I think how to discharge them, it puts me in mind that there is one sort of trouble which I have made no provision against in this treatise, which is for want of ability both to pay what we owe to those that love us, and also to express the sense which we have of their goodness. But I consider that this is such a pleasing sort of trouble, that one would not be willing that it should be cured. We have no reason to find fault that our friends will do us more good than we deserve, nor to complain that their goodness is greater than

we speak of. And that ought not, I know, to be the occasion of my trouble, which is your singular pleasure and contentment. And if this kind of acknowledgment will acquit me in any sort of ingratitude, I am but beginning to discharge and exonerate myself; for I had designed, before the publishing of this was thought of, to put a treatise of another nature in your hands. But I am well secured that I shall not trouble you by beginning my addresses to you with a discourse of troubles, as if I did bode some evil to you, because I believe that you desire rather to be prepared against any crosses, than to have none befall you. I confess I discern some defects in the first part of this treatise, which if I had penned with an intention to have sent abroad, I think that I should have taken some care to have seen supplied. But it will not be the less acceptable to you who are able I know out of the general truths here pro-

pounded, to raise such principles as will be able to give you satisfaction in particular cases not here named. Yet presuming that you will not be weary of reading any thing that comes from the hand of one whom you love so well, I shall here take the liberty to instance some things which would have deserved some particular consideration.

There is no greater trouble to some ingenuous souls than to be requited with injuries for the kindnesses they have done to others ; but they may soon consider that this befel our Master Jesus Christ himself. And though it be in their power to do good to others, yet it belongs not to them to make them good. And if there be any way to beget love in them, it is by love ; and there is no small contentment in loving those who have no love for us. For this is the very height of love ; and love itself is a thing so sweet, that it is its own reward.

But some, perhaps, have this addition of trouble, that their own friends do not love them ; and those whom God and nature do command to be kind, are ill-affected towards them. The same remedy will cure this disease. And let them turn their love into pity, that any should be so unhappy as to be strangers to the rarest pleasures in the world which arise from loving of others. And you may see from hence also the necessity of one rule which I have commended, which is, not to hope for any thing here below. And particularly remember this, that you may be disappointed if you look for any more satisfaction from your children, than the pleasure of doing good to them, and seeing them do good to themselves. For the old saying hath had but few hitherto to cross it, That love (like your inheritances) doth descend, but useth not to ascend.

But there are others that may say they

could easily brook any sufferings from others ; but that commonly it is the lot of those that suffer, to be thought guilty of those crimes for which they innocently suffer. *Quæ perferunt, meruisse creduntur.* The world is so sottish that they commonly think men deserve that which they endure ; and we are deprived many times not only of our enjoyments, but likewise of our fame ; and are denied not only our security, but likewise all apology for ourselves. But who can keep the world from thinking what it pleaseth ? Who knows not that it sees but with half an eye, if it be not stark blind ? And what shall we be the better if men think well of us, seeing what they think either one way or other, is with so little reason ? If we deserve not well, their thoughts and speeches can do us no good ; and if we do, God will take care that they shall do us no harm.

But there is a little number of good

souls, perhaps, who are troubled for what others suffer, and are afflicted with the misery of their neighbours. There are so few that complain of this grief, and it is a malady that men are so seldom sick of, that I should scarce have thought it needful to have prescribed any physic for such a rare disease. If the hurt do not touch us in our bodies, relations, or friends, we shall soon find comfort enough without any direction to alleviate the grief which we sustain for others, how heavy soever it may happen to be. But if any be oppressed with this sort of trouble, let them consider what is said in the ensuing treatise, that they do others no good, but themselves harm, by being troubled. And therefore let them be sensible of their miseries, so far only as to pray for them, and relieve them, if they can ; and to make their hearts sensible of God's mercies to themselves, and by that joy they may cure the other trouble.

1

But men are troubled, perhaps, that religion is like to suffer. I am very glad of it, if they be: for then I suppose such persons are so much in love with religion, that they will not let their trouble hinder any part of their duty. And if they do their duty, they may leave it to God to have a care of the interest of religion, for he loves it far better than we can do.

But some are troubled that they are no more troubled. A sad thing that we should be discontented at that, for which we should be thankful! For by this trouble they mean nothing else but a confusedness of spirit which never did any body any good. The rubbing of the eyes doth not fetch out the mote, but makes them more red and angry; no more doth this distraction and fretting of the mind discharge it of any ill humours, but rather makes them more abound to vex us.

But some are yet troubled because they

fall from the height of their resolution, and are more troubled now than once they were at what befalls them. Whereas they once observed these rules well, and kept themselves in peace, they fall now into some discontent again ; whereas they did pray with some fervour, they now abate of the height of their zeal. Truly, we must not expect while we are here below, in this cave or dungeon, to be quite free from all such damps. And it may be some degree of pride, not to be able to endure some dulness and coldness of spirit. Be not troubled if at all times you cannot do as well as you would, but labour to do as well as you can. And especially take heed that the not doing of what you did, do not breed in you a fearfulness that you shall never do as you were wont again. This dispirits the soul, and so disheartens it, that it runs itself into that very thing which it is taking a course to avoid.

Remember well that rule which is the first that you meet withal in the following book ; *Know your duty thoroughly, and then do it.* If you think it to be less than it is, you will not do what you ought ; and if you think it to be more than it is, you cannot do what you think you ought ; and if you think that anxiety of mind for what is not in your present power, is any part of your duty, you do not think as you ought. There was a great master among the Jews who bid his scholars consider, and tell him what was the best way wherein a man should always keep. One came, and said that there was nothing better than a good eye, which is in their language a liberal and contented disposition. Another said, a good companion is the best thing in the world. A third said, a good neighbour was the best thing he could desire. And a fourth preferred a man that could foresee things to come, i. e. a wise person. But at last came in one

Eleazar, and he said, a good heart was better than them all. True, said the master, thou hast comprehended in two words all that the rest have said. For he that hath a good heart, will be both contented, and a good companion, and a good neighbour, and easily see what is fit to be done by him.* Let every man, then, seriously labour to find in himself a sincerity and uprightness of heart at all times, and that will save him abundance of other labour.

But let me take upon me to be so far a master as to tell you, that next to this man, the second said right, that a good friend is the greatest easement in the world in this sort of troubles.

If a man therefore cannot quiet himself, let him get a good friend to whom he may unbosom his heart ; for two, saith Solomon, are better than one ; because if one fall, the other will lift up his fellow.

* R. Jochanin Pirke Avoth. cap. ii.

Two small streams united in one channel, may be able to bear a vessel of some burden ; and so may the counsels and comforts of two friends meeting together be able to support the weight of many troubles.

But if one will resolve to be troubled, I see there is no end of it ; for a man may be disquieted in his thoughts about the choice of such a friend.

Let such consider this, that perhaps God hath given them one already, and the person that lies in their arms may give the best advice unto them. Or their spiritual guide may be the most excellent friend. Or howsoever they may know who will make one, by their love to piety, by the simplicity of their manners, the innocency and modesty of their converse, their wise discourse, their freedom from pride and captiousness, and such like things. This likewise I may add, that though there be an inequality between that person and you,

which is a necessary thing to friendship, yet if other things be not wanting, love and friendship will make you equal.

But how if this friend should die, will some say, how much then shall I be troubled? And what remedy shall I use to give me comfort, when I have lost him that should comfort me! I told you there was no end of questions. But yet the resolution of this question will satisfy all; for he that can bear this trouble, will be able to support himself under all other. And therefore, since I resolved to let those meditations go further than yourselves, I have composed a little tract to wait upon them, which administers comfort against the loss of friends. It hath indeed, contrary to my first design, outgrown that in bigness which was born above two years before it; but yet the reason may be, because there is much of the other in it. For as it is in the calculations of our almanacs, which are

referred exactly to some certain place, but fit without sensible error the whole nation, so I observe it is in this discourse, which though it doth most properly belong to those who have lost their friends, yet hath many things in it which may indifferently serve all other persons who are troubled about worldly matters. And let me entreat you, and all others that read me, to remember always, that God rules the world ; and that those things which are *accidents* to us, are *Providences* with him ; and it will give you much satisfaction in your hearts. He hath made all these things mutable, and therefore it is a madness to think that they must always stand as we would have them ; and yet he is so good, that he hath made something good for us in every mutation ; so that it is a folly to be discontented that they continue not as we would have them. Who would go and seek for violets and primroses in the wood in the winter season ?

But then we may go and gather sticks to keep us warm. And in the spring, who looks for grapes and plumbs, and such ripe fruit? But yet we may prune the vines, and lop the trees, and wait awhile, and have what we desire. Assure yourselves it is forgetfulness of God that makes us troubled; yea, forgetfulness of ourselves also, who think we have lost our proper good, when we are well enough. And I think it will not unbecome me to speak to you in the words of a heathen, and bid you, "Be confident; and looking up to heaven, say, hereafter I will use myself to what thou wilt; I conform my thoughts wholly unto thee; I refuse nothing that seems good in thine eyes. Lead me whither thou wilt; give me what garments thou pleaseth; choose my food and provision for me, &c. I had always rather have that to be which already is, than any thing else; for I think that is better which God wills, than that which I."^b

^b Arrian. Epist. l. ii. cap. 16; l. iv. cap. 7.

Which submissive address of his to God, puts me in mind of some general rules laid down at the latter end of the first treatise, which it would have pleased you, perhaps, if they had been more enlarged. I shall take leave, therefore, to extend this Preface a little further ; that if it be possible, I may not let you want any thing which you may chance to desire.

And for direction of your prayers to God in these cases, be sure first to observe the cause of all your trouble, the fountain which casts forth the mire and dirt into your souls. When we know the cause of a malady, it is half cured. And seeing this cause, you will find to be within yourselves ; therefore, secondly, Pray not so much against trouble, as the cause of the trouble. Pray for a contented mind, a low esteem of the world, a new opinion of things, a humble frame of heart, and such like graces. If we merely pray not to be troubled, and

rest in general expressions, we shall find little ease to our hearts. Thirdly, Pray not so much for removal of the thing that troubles you, as for strength to bear it, and divine power to support you under it, and heavenly wisdom to make an advantage of it. Fourthly, If you do pray for the removal of any outward burden, and the prevention of any loss, yet let it be with an indifferent mind, lest you be more troubled when you find that God doth not hear those prayers. Fifthly, When you are troubled for one fault, be troubled for all, and pray for a new heart. When you have done any evil, then be humbled for the neglect of so much good, which may be the reason of that evil. For when a malady doth affect a particular part, the whole body must be purged; or else, if we apply the remedy only to that part, we shall but drive the humour to some other place. And sixthly, I would wish you to apply the remedy pre-

sently, before the trouble eat into the flesh. As soon as you see it is come, fly to God, and take your antidotes, and beseech him to bless them to you. I cannot but here again transcribe another excellent speech of the same heathen : “ Either God can do something, or he cannot. If he can do nothing, why dost thou pray to him ? If he can do something, why dost thou not pray that thou mayest not fear, nor desire, nor be sad for any of these things, rather than that this or that thing should be or not be to thee ? If he can help us, then he can help us to be without a thing as well as to have it ; and not to fear a thing, as well as not to have it. Begin, therefore, to beg these things of God by prayer, and thou shalt see what will be the issue of it. One prays that he may have such an one to wife ; do thou pray that thou mayest not desire her. Another prays to be eased of tyranny : do thou pray that

thou mayest be able to bear it. O, let not my child die, saith another; but do thou say, O, let me not fear the loss of it. Turn thy prayers, I say, all this way, and see what will come of it."^c Thus that royal philosopher.

And as for faith, which is another thing there mentioned, I entreat you to believe, first, that God is not hard to please. Persuade yourselves that he is good and gracious, and accepts of the sincere, hearty, and constant endeavours of his servants to do his will. Secondly, believe that he would have us pleased too, and delights in our contentment. It is not pleasing to him to see us troubled, nor doth he wish to see us full of perplexed thoughts: neither doth he willingly grieve us, or send such things upon us that should molest us; but he loves to have all his children in peace. And thirdly, Believe fully that he hath the greatest mind to give that which will

^c M. Antoninus, l. ix. sect. 40.

remedy the greatest cause of troubles, and that is, his Divine Grace and Holy Spirit. Sin is that which makes all our sores so angry : the Spirit of the Most High is that which will enable us to mortify it : and this Spirit we may have as readily from him, as a piece of bread from the hands of our dearest parent. Go on courageously, therefore, and be confident ; seeing there is nothing that God is more desirous to bestow, than that which will cure us of all our griefs.

Of these I shall say no more, and of the rest nothing at all, lest I should weary my other readers, though not you, who have given me abundant testimony that I can do nothing to displease you, and thereby laid a perpetual engagement upon me to be, the most affectionate of those that love and serve you,

SYMON PATRICK.

From your house at Battersea,
October 4, 1659.



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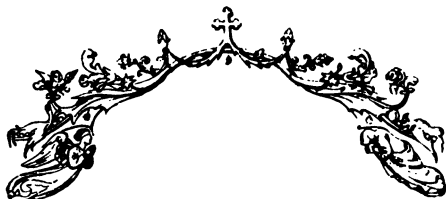
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THE
HEART'S EASE,

&c.



JOHN xiv. 1.

LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.

It is not either fineness of wit, or abundance of wealth, or any such like inward or outward ornament, that makes the difference between men, and renders the one better than the other; but the firmness of good principles, the settledness of the spirit, and the quiet of the mind. To the obtaining of which, all the old philosophers, many hundreds of years before

our Saviour, did wisely summon all their forces; all whose lessons, when they are summed up, amount only to this, to teach a man how to be contented. Socrates was upon this score accounted the best amongst them, because though he understood but a little of the frame of nature, yet he well understood himself; and perceived that he was not the wisest man that could read rare things in the stars, and could follow the paths of the sun, and trace all the heavenly bodies in the course which they run; but he that could tell how not to be troubled either for the want of that knowledge, or for any other thing.

Christianity hath not a new design in hand, but more rare and excellent instruments to effect the old. What heathens could speak of, it enables us to do. And still it is as true as ever it was, that nothing betters a man's condition, but that which rids him of all his griefs, and eases him of his troubles. So a great divine among the ancients observes, that Christians are not distinguished from others *σχήμασι καὶ τύποις ἐξωτέροις*, by outward fashions

and modes, by their external forms and moulds into which they are cast, or by professing a body of notions differing from others in the world; but by the renewing of their minds, by the peaceableness of their thoughts, by charity and heavenly love,^c &c. And if we behold in their minds, as in other men's, great shakings or earthquakes, unsettled thoughts and reasonings, unbelief, confusedness, trouble, trembling, fearfulness, (all these words he uses) they are fast bound to worldly things, they have not attained the end of their Christianity, and are but a little bettered by their new condition.^d

That Christ came to discharge the mind of these troublesome guests, the text, and many other verses of the ensuing chapters, plainly tell us: the sense of which is this, 'Do but believe that I am from God, and that what I

^c Τῇ τοῦ νοὸς ἀνακαινήσει, τῇ τῶν λογισμῶν εἰρήνῃ, καὶ τῇ τοῦ κυρίου ἀγάπῃ καὶ οὐρανίῳ ἔρωτι, &c.
—Macarius, Homil. v.

^d Σεισμὸν καὶ ἀκαταστασίαν τῶν λογισμῶν, καὶ ἀπιστίαι, καὶ συγχυσις, καὶ ταραχὴν καὶ δειλίαν.

say is his mind, and you need not be troubled.' The faith of Christ is an antidote against all evil: peace is the proper result of the Christian temper. It is the great kindness which our religion doeth us, that it brings us to a settledness of mind, and a consistency within ourselves.

Our Saviour, when he spake these words, was just going to leave his little flock; and you must needs think that his patients who were yet under his cure, could not but take the news of his departure very heavily: therefore, as a wise and tender Physician, he prescribes them the best directions that he could, and leaves them in their hands; assuring them that every precept of his was a sovereign medicine, every promise of his a cordial to relieve their fainting spirits; and particularly telling them that he would send the Comforter, and that they should be under the regimen and care of the Holy Ghost. These heavenly recipes they have transcribed and transmitted unto all succeeding ages; so that over the Gospel we may write what the Egyptians did

over the library, τὸ μὲν ψυχῶν ἰατρεῖον, this is the hospital for sick souls. After all our search, something will trouble us, unless we have recourse hither; or if nothing do, our case is so much the worse, and that which now would be only trouble, will hereafter be tribulation and anguish.

That which I intend for the subject of my discourse is this, *That a Christian heart ought not to be troubled*; or, *That it doth not become a faithful soul to admit of any disquiet in it.*

By trouble, I understand that tumultuous disorder in the soul which arises from the prevalency of these passions,—fear, carefulness, sorrow, anger, and the rest of their kindred, which have evil for their object. These passions are raised either from something *within* us, or from something *without* us; our Saviour chiefly speaks of the latter, and so shall I also, yet so, as to have some regard to the former, that so I may in all particulars leave the mind well satisfied. That I may not spend so much time in other things, as to have none remaining for that which I mainly intend, I shall not •

tie myself to the laws of an exact method, but make my discourse consist only of these two general parts: I. Of some reasons why a Christian should not be troubled. II. Of some rules to keep our hearts from trouble.



CHAPTER I.

TWO REASONS AGAINST TROUBLE, DRAWN FROM
CHRIST'S PROMISES, AND GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

1. For the former, let us consider, *That trouble is a great disparagement to the promises of the gospel.* which give us ease in every case, unless we refuse to become God's patients, and will not use his remedies. In the case of sin's prevalency, it saith, "Sin shall not have dominion over you,"^f &c.; "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free,"^g &c.; "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father,"^h &c. which supports our spirits under the thoughts both of what we have admitted, and what we fear we shall admit. To the poor man and the persecuted, it saith, "Let *your* conversation be without covetousness," &c.; "So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and

^f Romans vi. 14. ^g Ibid. viii. 2. ^h 1 John ii. 1, 2.

I will not fear what man shall do unto me ;”¹ and, “ Seek *ye* first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,^k &c. ; “ Blessed *are* they which *are* persecuted for righteousness sake,”¹ &c. And (that I may not enumerate all particulars) it saith to every Christian, whatsoever condition he be in, “ Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” “ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,”^m &c.

When we sit down, therefore, desponding either under the power or the guilt of our sins, and think that they can never be forgiven, or never overcome ; when we murmur, or are dejected, because we are mean, despised, and afflicted ; when we are impatient for the loss of our friends, or our goods, &c. we do only betray our own ignorance, or unbelief, or idleness. We either know not what the gospel speaks, or we do not believe it, or we

¹ Hebrews xiii. 5, 6.

^k Matthew vi. 33.

¹ Matthew v. 10, 11, 12.

^m Philipians iv. 6, 7.

resolve not to be the better for it, if it will put us to any labour ; either we or the gospel must bear the blame of our trouble and disquiet ; either that cannot relieve us, or we do ill to behave ourselves as though it could not. I know every good Christian will accuse himself, not that ; but let him consider that he cannot do it, nor his Saviour honour, but by ceasing his discontents ; for others will think that he is no better physician than the rest, who hath no better success in his cures.

2. It is a great disparagement to the providence of God, which rules the world. If there were no providence, I confess we were destitute of the greatest reason that man hath against fears, and cares, and sorrows ; and he that is troubled, would be less unreasonable, because all the care would lie upon himself, and his own shoulders must alone bear the burden of every accident. But seeing we acknowledge an eternal wisdom, an infinite, unprejudiced understanding, that governs and superintends in all affairs, it is the greatest folly to be disquieted, and to deport ourselves

as if we and chance ruled all. Some have satisfied themselves with this single thought, that it is in vain to be troubled, since things must not be as we will, but as that Almighty Being pleases, a cold comfort, one would think, to be content upon necessity; and yet, this some heathens have mainly insisted upon as their support. Thanks be to God that we have something better for to quiet us, and that is this, that the world is governed, not merely by God's will, but by his wisdom. He disposeth all things according to his pleasure, but it pleaseth him to do all things for the best. He rules the world, not as an absolute Lord, so that we should be sensible only of his power, but as a loving Father, so that we should be confident of his goodness. And therefore his children should not be displeased, as if they were none of his family, nor within the verge of his care, and were wholly forgotten by him; but they should comfort themselves that they are in such safe hands, who will do nothing but with the greatest reason, and for the most excellent ends. Τὰ τῶν Θεῶν

προνοίας μέσα, was a pithy saying of one of the better sort of heathens,ⁿ *All God's actions are full of providence*; and therefore there is no reason that we should be displeased, as if God did not do well, or we could do better. You would think it strange if the flocks and herds should make a mutiny, because their shepherd chooses their pasture for them, and will not let them wander into wild desarts and barren places, nor stray one from another, they know not whither, nor run in rank meadows and fat grounds, that may breed a rot among them; and yet such a thing is our trouble and vexation, because we cannot do as we list, or are not as we would choose. It is a fond desire to have the rod and the staff out of the hand of the Shepherd of Israel; and then we might soon walk into dangerous paths, and when we had brought ourselves into the valley of the shadow of death, find none at all to afford us any comfort.

It is distrust of God to be troubled about what is to come; impatience against God to

ⁿ M. Anton. l. ii. sect. 3.

be troubled for what is present ; and anger at him to be troubled for what is past. This temper of spirit finds fault with his wisdom, and blames his goodness, and depresses his power, and reprehends his faithfulness in the disposal of things ; and therefore it is a sin, and speedily to be amended.

To be troubled, speaks as if God had provided better for the beasts than for mankind ; for they live in peace within themselves, and we hear not of their murmurs and complaints. And by the same reason that thou art troubled, all the men in the world may be vexed also ; and so none think or speak well of God, but behave themselves as if he cared not for his rational creatures. For thou mayest consider that God hath endowed thee with an understanding of such a size, with abilities and capacities of such a proportion, and measured for thee such a fortune and condition as now thou hast : if thou art not contented, but frettest within thyself that thou art not better, then so may another man, for he wants something also ; yea, so may all men, for they are all imperfect.

And upon the same grounds that thou art troubled for the want of one particular thing, thou mayest at the next step be troubled that thou art not a king, or that thou art not an angel; and an angel may also be troubled that he is not a principality, or one of the seven spirits that stand at the throne of God; and one of those may take it ill that he was not made to understand more; and so the best things would be most miserable, because they understand best their own wants. Many arguments to this purpose might be heaped up from the consideration of God's providence; but I shall only mention one more.

God's providence hath so ordered the several degrees of things in the world, that none of them should be troubled, but should mutually help and be assistant unto each other in their several wants; and so there is not the greatest man living but stands in need of the meanest, as much as the meanest doth of him; just as none of us can live without the beasts, no more than many of them can live without us.

What things we want, God hath otherwise supplied us with; either in some other kind, or else in the same by some other help: which is an observation that we are so well acquainted withal, that we are not discontented because we need clothes, and were born naked into the world; nor do we account the beasts have a privilege above us, because they come well clad into being, and provided with apparel for all their lives, or are armed with horns and hoofs; for God hath given unto us reason, which is a better thing, and hath made them both to clothe and to arm us. Now so it is in other cases: as God hath made the brutes to help us in lesser things, so hath he made other men to relieve our greater necessities, to comfort us in our sadnesses, to supply us in our wants, to advise us in our straits, and to be eyes and hands unto us, if we have no wisdom nor strength of our own; yea, his own Son hath he given to make an universal provision for us. Now when we ask and resolve ourselves, Which is better, to come into the world with clothes on our back, or to have

reason? we should ascend up a little higher in our thoughts, and put to ourselves a parallel case; Which is best, to have all in thy own hands and sole disposal, or to have a Supreme Providence, an Infinite Wisdom, to govern all thy affairs? When we find the difference between these two, let us not live as if God ruled not at all, or as if it were better that we did rule than he.



CHAPTER II.

THREE OTHER REASONS, WHICH SHEW THAT WE
MAY BE GOOD, WHATEVER COMES; AND WE
MAY TURN IT INTO GOOD; AND IF WE DO NOT,
IT WILL BE A DOUBLE EVIL.

3. WE should not be troubled, because we may be good in every condition. What should he fear, who may always be what he should be? What need he be vexed, who need not be miserable unless he will? What cause hath he to be displeased, who may always please God and himself too? The philosophers used to comfort themselves with this, The tyrant may kill me, but he cannot hurt me; he may make me suffer torments, but he cannot make me do a dishonest action. I may be poor, but still I may be just, and I may be contented. I may be ill spoken of, but still I can do well. I may be sick, but still I may be patient. I may be in prison, but there I may pray and sing as Paul and Silas did. That which

cannot hinder our duty, should not be so sadly lamented ; or (as the noble philosopher and emperor speaks,) “ How should that make the life of man worse, which doth not make worse the man himself ? ” ° If we can do what becomes us both to God and men, why should we be disturbed at what men do unto us ? If they should take away our lives, they cannot take away our religion. We may be holy, when they will not let us be in the world. Yea, there are some particular virtues to be exercised in a suffering condition, which else we might not have had occasion for ; and so we have no reason to be angry if they have done us a courtesy, and make us better than we should have been, when they intended to have made us worse. And that is the fourth thing, which I desire may be considered.

4. We may make an advantage of every accident ; according to that of the apostle, “ All things work together for good to them that

° °Ο δὲ χεῖρω μὴ ποίει ἄνθρωπον, πῶς ἂν τοῦτο βίον ἀνθρώπου χεῖρω ποιήσκειν.—M. Anton. l. ii. sect 11.

love God ;" ^p viz. by our prudence and observation, and taking those occasions which are offered us, and God's grace assisting us. It is not in our power always to be in health, or to be rich, &c. but when sickness or poverty comes, we can make a good use of it, and turn it into health and riches, other ways. "The life of man," saith Plato, "is like to a game at tables,^q wherein two things are considerable; the one within our power, and the other without; the chance is not in us, but to play it well is. When we cannot have a good cast, it remains that by our skill and art we make a bad one good."^r What shall fall out, is not within us to choose; but to manage and improve that which happens, and turn it to our advantage, by the goodness and grace of God, is within ourselves, and nothing that is without us can intermeddle, or be an impediment to us in it. Zeno, I remember, having lost all his goods by

^p Romans viii. 28.

^q Κυβεία γὰρ ὁ Πλάτων τὸν βίον ἀπέικασεν, &c.—
Plutarch. de tranquill.

^r Si illud quod est maxime opus jactu non cadit, illud quod cecidit forte, id arte ut corrigas.—*Terent.*

shipwreck, sought for no port but Athens, and betook himself from merchandize to the study of philosophy ; and so he revenged himself on fortune (as he called it,) by becoming a scholar and an honest man, crying out, “ Now I made a good voyage when I lost all.”^s Such a story Nicephorus tells us, of one Cyrus, a courtier in the time of Theodosius the younger, who through the envious accusations of some favourites, being spoiled of his goods, of a Pagan he became a Christian, and of a Christian, a priest of God ; and at last attained the degree of a bishop. So true is that which a holy father said, “ Danger is better than safety, and a storm more eligible than a perpetual calm ; if before our fears we were the world’s, but after them we became God’s.”^t Which puts me in mind of an admirable prayer or thanksgiving rather of Philagrius, who, hearing the same father expound to him the 73d Psalm, as he lay under a sore sick-

^s Jam bene navigavi, cum naufragium feci.

^t Κρείττων ἀσφαλείας κίνδυνος, &c.
Greg. Naz. Epist 19, ad Cæsar. fratrem.

ness, lifted up his hands to heaven, and turning his eyes eastward, said, "I thank thee, O Father, the Creator of thy mankind,^u that thou doest us good against our wills, and purifiest our inward man by the outward. I thank thee, that thou conductest us by cross and contrary ways to a blessed end, according to such reasons as are known to thyself."

There is reason, then, we should be of good cheer, since things are as we please to make them. We need not be troubled, since what befalls us to our cross, may serve a better end than that which we pursued; and the sighs and groans which our affliction extorted, be converted into the joyful sound of praise to God. If we be made better men, more holy and severe in our lives, more certain of heaven, and more desirous to be there,—if we learn to know the world better, to place less confidence in it, and to expect nothing from it,—then there is no reason that we should accuse our fortune.

For who is a loser that parts with a friend,

^u Ποιητὰ τῶν σῶν ἀνθρώπων. — Epist. 66.

and gets God for his Father, and commits himself to his providence? that loses a husband or a wife, and dwells for ever after in the arms of God, and is inflamed with a greater love of heavenly things? The world, perhaps, doth not love us; have we not reason to thank it, if it make us to place our comfort and contentment in God, and a pure conscience? Or they are unkind whom we have most obliged; but we repent not that we have done such ungrateful persons good; we still love them, and lay up hereafter our hopes and expectations above; and then, when we cast up our accounts, we find that we are gainers by them.

Thus in all cases we may say as he did, “O happy Providence, my good Master, that teaches me better than I could do myself;”^v who not only invites me, but compels me unto virtue. Now I am well, because I was ill; I have lost one thing, and gained many—God, virtue, and myself. I have not what I desired, but I have what I ought to have desired.

^v Εὖ γ' ὦ τύχη, μοι τῶν καλῶν διδάσκαλε.

Another hath done for me that which I should have done myself.

5. *Trouble makes every sad accident a double evil, and contentedness makes it none at all.* If we will, it can do us no harm; if we give way to it, we also wound ourselves, and join with it to make ourselves miserable. There is a perfect emblem of our folly in the story of a simple rustic, who going home out of the field, laid the plough on the back of the ass, and then got up himself also; and observing the poor beast to be oppressed, could find no better way to ease her, but by laying the plough upon his own shoulder; so loading himself, and not at all easing her of her burden.

Our bodies are compared by the ancients to the beast; ^w the *mind* they call the man, the *soul* is ourself. When the body is oppressed with many miseries, by cares and grief we think to ease it; when, alas, we take not the loads off from it, but only lay them upon ourselves. The same burden remains upon the poor beast, and the man also bears

^w Τὸ θηρίον ἐν ἡμῖν.

it upon his back. Like a bird in the lime-twigs, the more we flutter the more we are entangled; and that which was but a single mischief before, by our own follies becomes two, or a great many. But if we stir not at all, but be quiet and still, then we are what we were before this evil came; only our souls have the addition of the greatest joy and pleasure by the victory we have obtained: for it hath no small effect upon our souls, that we can be joyful when there is matter of sorrow, and that we can overcome the world, and depend upon nothing for our happiness but God and our own souls. Let us not sin, then, against reason, as well as against God, providence, and religion: not make ourselves more miserable than we need be. When we lose our estates, let us not lose our constancy, and our cheerfulness too; if thou hast lost thy health, do not lose thy patience also; if thou must die a little sooner than thou thoughtest, do not die unwillingly: if thou hast no friend, be not also thine own enemy; if others vex thee, do not withal vex thyself; if thou be ill

to-day, be not also solicitous for to-morrow ;
“ sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” *
Which are almost the very words of Ben Syra,
who gives this reason against such vexatious
thoughts ; Perhaps to-morrow shall not be,
and so thou afflictest thyself for that which
nothing belongs to thee. We multiply our
evils by our trouble, and bring those upon our-
selves which perhaps were never intended for
our portion. But our quietness disappoints
the enemy, and will weary him in his assaults,
when he sees that we do but grow better by
what befalls us, and turn it into victory and
triumph. So a wise man once said, “ No man
ever reproached me more than once ; for by
patient bearing his reproaches the first time, I
taught him to abstain the second.”

* Matthew vi. 34.



CHAPTER III.

SOME OTHER REASONS, FROM THE KINDNESS THAT
MAY BE INTENDED US IN EVERY THING, FROM
THE NATURE OF THE WORLD, AND THE NA-
TURE OF VIRTUE.

6. *Be not troubled at that which may be sent to breed the greatest joy.* Not to speak of spiritual joys, which all troublesome things do breed in holy men, by making them more holy, (according as the apostle saith, Heb. xii. 11.) many sad accidents in men's account have proved the greatest means of temporal advantage, and ended in their outward prosperity. You know how it fared with Joseph, and that the chains of iron upon his legs were the occasion of the chain of gold about his neck; his prison was the way to a throne. And, as St. James speaks, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of

tender mercy." ^y And church history tells us, that Eudoxia, the daughter of a philosopher in Athens, being cast out of her father's house by her unkind brethren, and coming to Constantinople to beseech Theodosius, junior, the emperor, that he would right a poor orphan, found such favor in his eyes, that he made her his queen, and she got a palace, who sought but for a house. So true is that which the heathen observed, "Wrong oft-times makes way for a better fortune." ^z A fever, Hippocrates observes, puts an end to some diseases, and delivers those from death, who could no other way be cured. ^a And so Cardan tells us that an imprisonment which once befel him, which he looked upon as the greatest disgrace, did him at length the greatest honour, and so wiped off all reproaches from his name, *Ut nec suspicionis vestigium emicuerit*, ^b that there was not the least footstep left of any suspicion. The same author (who had as

^y James v. 11.

^z Majori sæpe fortunæ locum fecit injuria.—*Sen.*

^a In Aphoris.

^b *L. de vita propria. cap. 33.*

many strange and unusual accidents in his life as any man I ever read or heard of) tells us elsewhere this notable observation which he made; "It is fatal to me, that all good which befalls me begins in some evil."^c Consider, then, that what happens to one, yea, to many, may happen to thee. Why shouldest thou be troubled, till thou knowest whether thou hast reason to be troubled or no? Wait, stay awhile, thou canst but be troubled at the last; and perhaps thou shalt have reason to rejoice both for that evil, and for that thou wast not troubled. The conclusion of a matter is most to be regarded; and we can know little in the beginning.

Moses' rod was a serpent till he took it by the tail, and then it became what it was before: and if we would lay hold upon things only by their end, we should find many things, that seem terrible and noxious, to be benign and salutiferous. *Finis, rerum caput est*, as one wittily said; Begin, therefore, at the end.

^c *Fatale mihi est omne bonum ex malo initium habere.—*
Card. de libris propriis.

Judge nothing, but hope well till thou seest the conclusion. Why shouldest thou not entertain thyself with good hopes now, as well as at another time? Why wilt thou keep up and maintain the old piece of folly, to hope for much, when thou need hope for nothing; and to hope for nothing, when thou hast nothing to live upon but hopes? I mean, to be big with expectation in prosperity, when thou hast enough in present possession; and to be as full of despair in adversity, when expectation is all thou hast left.

It is our grand fault, that we are affected presently according as every thing appears in the face, and we stay not till it turn about and shew us the other side. So the pleasures of sin deceive us, which come on with a beautiful countenance and smiling looks, with a painted face and flattering words, but go off again with blushing and shame, with pain and sorrow; and all the ugliness appears when they have but turned their backs upon us. And so the cross accidents of the world do dismay us in such like manner, which come

upon us with a sad and cloudy look, but have a bright side behind ; and if we would but be patient till the shower or storm be over, we might behold the face of the sun breaking forth upon us.

But you will say, What if the black night do continue, and events do not answer my expectations ?

I answer ; you will be glad that you have not been troubled, and have kept yourselves in comfort by good hopes for so long a time, wherein else you must have lived in trouble. But then I say further, that if hope of better things in this world can do so much to support a man so long, the hopes of incomparably better things in heaven you may easily consider will make you never to be troubled to your life's end. Cardan tells us that he used to cure little griefs by play and sports, and great ones by false hopes and excogitations.^d If but imaginary and invented hopes were found by him to be of some efficacy, we cannot reasonably doubt but those which are real and

^d De vita prop. c. 52.

certain will be of far greater, and far longer force. Let us not, therefore, be troubled, seeing there may be cause, if we knew all, to rejoice.

To these reasons may be added many others, which even heathens have light upon; as,

7. *We should not be troubled at what is natural.* Now our body is a part of the world; and it is natural to it to feel the mutations and changes that are in that thing of which it is a part; and if one member suffer, at least those which are next to it will suffer likewise; and man hath no reason to repine that he fares as other pieces of this great body doth. Antoninus calls him that takes in ill part what here befalls him, “an imposthume, and tumour as it were of the world;”^e one that hath made an abscession and departure from the whole, like a bag of suppurated blood that feels nothing, and hath no communion with the body.

8. *Nor should we be troubled,* say they, *at what is profitable.* There is nothing hap-

^e Ἀπόστημα, καὶ οἶον φύμα τοῦ κόσμου.—l. ii. sect. 16.

pens but what conduces, some way or other, to the good of the world, or is of advantage to some part of it, though not to thee. Many changes are necessary to the natural preservation of things; as thy friends must die, else there would not be room for others that are coming into being, and the world would be too little for its inhabitants; others to the preservation of civil government, and others for the correction and amendment of men's manners. And as in all changes of the seasons of the year, we see thereby that fruits, and the rest of things, are the better provided for; so they suppose that every other alteration that is in any part of nature, tends to the preservation and continuance of it, some way or other.^f

9. "It is in vain likewise, (as I touched before) in their opinion, to be troubled; and patience is his remedy who hath no remedy else."^g

10. It is also to be considered, that it is no great proof of virtue to trouble others; but this is excellent, quietly to bear the trouble they give to us.

^f Ἐκείνης ἐστὶ σωστικόν.

^g Consilium ejus est, qui nullum habet consilium.

CHAPTER IV.

WHERE WE MUST LAY OUR FOUNDATION OF
SETTLEMENT, AND HOW IT MUST BE LAID.

THESE, and such like arguments, I shall dismiss, and proceed rather unto the second general part of my discourse which I propounded.

The rules we should observe to preserve us from trouble; which I shall lay down after I have premised these two things.

1. Let us seek for them in their right place where they are to be found. And then,

2. Let us firmly settle ourselves upon such principles; else we shall always be shaking.

For the first, that we may find out the truest rules for the obtaining peace and quiet, let us resolve that—Evil is not so much in things, as in ourselves; and if the evil which disquiets us be not in outward things, neither is the good which must give us rest, to be found in them. All unquietness arises from

the mind; and a plaister applied to the stomach will as soon cure a wounded conscience, as riches, or any thing in the world, heal a discontented mind. All the earthquakes and shakings are begot within our own bowels, and proceed not from the winds which blow without. This, therefore, is the first thing we must do, get acquaintance with our own hearts, and see the cause of all our grief: for nothing will heal us without ourselves. Our Saviour seems to intimate this truth to us in that phrase in the gospel, *ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτὸν*, he troubled himself,^h (as the margin hath it) which some think signifies the perfection of our Saviour, that nothing could trouble him: but it also shews whence properly trouble arises, viz. from the motion of man's own spirit, which our Saviour could compose; but now he groaned, even to the troubling and disturbing of himself. For want of this easy observation it is, that men labour for peace at endless expenses both of pains, money, and time, yet never purchase it. Some seek for it in company and cheerful so-

^h John xi. 33.

ciety, which they think can put away the melancholy; but still they mind not that they carry the disease about them, which cannot so be cured. Others seek for it in a contrary way of a solitary life, by quitting the affairs of the world, and retiring from all company into a closet; but all this while they retire not from themselves, and the evil spirit which is in them is not yet cast out. So while they thought they had ended their trouble, they did but change it; while they shake off all, they are disquieted, because they have not shaken off themselves. Their own foolish opinions, appetites, passions and desires, remain unmortified; and though they should never see man, they will have vexation enough from these. Others seek for it in travel, and seeing foreign parts; but this will not effect the business neither, as long as they have themselves in company. Motion will but stir and enrage the humour, and make it more turbulent and unquiet. Others leave off some evil practices¹ which they find do disturb them;

¹ Nam luctata Canis nodum abripit, &c.—*Pers. Sat. 5.*

but as long as the body of sin is remaining, they are not settled. They are like the dog who breaks his chain, but a great part of it still he trails after him. They retain their ancient love and affection, and so are the same men, though they do not the same things. And as some one, I remember, saith, He that retires out of the world, and thinks thereby to be at peace, but yet desires the fame or the glory of the world, or any thing else that is in it, he hath only his arms and his legs out of it, his heart and his mind is still in it. Here, therefore, we must begin (as I said) in the mortification of ourselves. If we be not quieted within, every thing in the world will make us miserable; if we be, then nothing can harm us. If our false opinions, unreasonable desires, fond affections, ungrounded hope, &c. be alive, we are no longer quiet than the world pleaseth. Our peace is at the mercy of every report, of every man's mouth, and all the several accidents of evil that are in the world. If we be sick, and are afraid to die; if we be in pain, and have no patience; if we be scorned, and are

proud; if we be lessened in our estates, and are covetous, &c. then nothing can help us from being miserable. But, on the contrary, if we do not fear death so much as an ill life; if we think impatience and murmuring a worse disease than the gout; if we think pride to be the greatest reproach and the highest disgrace, and take covetousness to be the greatest beggary and basest poverty, there is no harm a man can feel by death, or sickness, or scorn, or want. When all the alterations in the world will not quiet us, one alteration will, and that is the change of our opinions concerning things, and our estimate of them: by this one, more will be done than by ten thousand changes. The heathen could say, That no man can make another a slave, unless he hath first enslaved himself. Be not enthralled to pleasure or pain, to hope or fear, to life or death, and thou art free.^k What he said in this case, we may say in all other; nothing can overcome him, that is not first overcome

¹ *Ουτινος οὐκ ἡδονὴ κρείττων ἐστίν, οὐ πόνος, οὐ πλούτος, &c. τένος ἔτι οὗτος δοῦλος ἐστι;—
Arrian. l. iii. cap. 24.

by his own imaginations and passions. Thou art poor, perhaps, and contemned: what of that, if thou hast not this beggarly thought also, that riches and honour make a man? Another hath a bad opinion of thee; but what then, if thou hast not also a foolish opinion, that men's censures are much to be minded? In every thing rule but thyself, and thou shalt be at ease, because thou wilt be thyself; but never wilt thou till then be eased. For remember this as a true saying, which may be added to the reasons foregoing, "A proud man hath no God; an unpeaceable man hath no neighbour; a distrustful man hath no friend; and he that is discontented hath not himself."

Not the rich man, or the wise man, always possesses himself; but, "in your patience," saith our Saviour, "possess ye your souls."¹

We have found, therefore, where we must begin to lay a foundation for all our rules, viz. in ourselves. But then, secondly, we must build and firmly seat ourselves upon these principles; for if we do not use them, notwith-

¹ Luke xxi. 19.

standing all that I can say, we shall be troubled. By the former discourse you may easily perceive that we cannot be at peace without our own pains. There is nothing that I can say will work as physic doth in the body by its natural force, whether you think of it or no: but every thing must have the help of your serious consideration, and you must frequently practise according to what you think. As the things that will give us peace must be laid in ourselves, so they cannot be there laid without ourselves. They cannot be applied to our minds as a salve or an ointment to our bodies; but by the force of our own thoughts we must work them into our souls.

One thing more of this nature I must add; but I will reserve it till the conclusion; and now give you those rules that we must live by, telling you, as I pass along, for what particular disease each one of them is a proper remedy.



CHAPTER V.

TWO RULES DIRECTING US UNTO PEACE, BY UNDERSTANDING, AND DOING, AND DISTINGUISHING OF OUR DUTY.

I. *Know thy duty, and do it.* Charge not thyself with more than thy duty, as those do who think they must always be at prayer, or hearing sermons, or reading spiritual books, or do make rash vows; nor with less than thy duty, as those do who content themselves with the observation of some precepts, or a seldom regard to their whole work; but labour to understand what God requires, and industriously labour to perform it. For it is impossible that either of those in the extremes should be at rest; the one *never*, because he can never do all that which he thinks he ought; the other *not always*, because his conscience will sometimes rebuke him that he is an hypocrite, i. e. a partial Christian. An ignorant person, therefore, or an idle person, can have no true

peace. We must be, 1. inquisitive into the gospel, and labour to understand what we have to do: 2. then resolve heartily, and endeavour seriously, to do it all: 3. and then inquire what remedy there is, if we fail and fall short after these hearty and serious endeavours. The first and last of these do most concern our knowledge, the middle our practice. And the knowing and doing according to our knowledge, and making use of the antidote when we have miscarried, will keep us in peace, from that trouble which arises from sin. A wicked man *cannot* be in peace if he understand himself: and you must not think that I come to prescribe to any but those who will be Christ's disciples, and follow him; for to such the text speaks: and a man of a weak understanding *will not* be in peace; therefore we must grow in knowledge, if we would be without trouble: and a Christian that walks carelessly, without observance of himself, *ought not* to be in peace till he grow more watchful; and then, if he be surprised, he knows where to take refuge. But there is no sanctuary in

Christ for a trifling and unguarded spirit, without great sorrow, repentance, amendment, and after-care and diligence. We must understand that every indisposition of body is not a sin; and that our peace must not be broken, because we are not always in the same temper, nor cannot so cheerfully do our duty, &c. We must know that a sudden surprisal, a hasty passion, a sudden thought, is not to break us all in pieces. And, on the contrary, we must know that our voluntary admission even of these, or letting of them stay, our not watching against them, and our frequent falling into that sin, which at first did but surprise us, must trouble us; and there is no peace unless we grow better, and more seriously mind our duty.

Study, therefore, the Christian religion, as it is contained in the gospel, and then thou wilt find there is but this one thing more to be done to keep thee in peace, viz. a careful endeavour to live as thou art directed. And the sum of the gospel is this; "Live soberly, righteously, and godly," ^m and where after all

our care we fail, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."^a This first rule I conceive will make very good way for all the rest into our souls, and will have a kind of universal influence into us upon all occasions. We need be offended at nothing, if we have a care not to offend God. And I think he said truly, who affirmed, "that there is no joy but in God, and no sorrow but in an evil conscience."

As thou must know thy duty, so labour to distinguish between thy own duty, and another man's. And this will keep thee from being troubled at the actions and carriage of men in the world towards thee and others. If men
X slight us, and despise us, and speak evil unjustly of us, and take away our good name, yea, if they take away our estates, &c. if we be not angry, nor filled with hatred and despite, nor retaliate their wrongs, then it is not we, but they, that ought to be troubled. Our duty is secured, and therein we should rejoice.

^a 1 John i. 9.

And I may take occasion here to observe, that we may learn our duty by their ill behaviour, and study the more to avoid those things in ourselves, which do so much displease us in others. If we be at all troubled, let it be rather for the sin of him that injures us, than for our own suffering.

This rule may be put into other words, which will make it, perhaps, comprehensive of more cases. Let us consider what is in our own power, and what is not.

There is nothing in thy own power, but thy own will and choice ; all other things are in the hand of God, or in the power of other men. It was never in thy power to be handsome, or witty, or born of noble or virtuous parents, &c. why then art thou troubled about such things ? But it is in thy power to be good and virtuous thyself, to have a beauteous soul, and to be rich in good works, &c. and if thou be not thus, then thou art concerned. If men's tongues be unruly, and their hands be violent, and thou sufferest unjustly by both, how canst

thou help it? Thou art not troubled if a dog bark, or an ass kick, because it is their nature, and thou canst not rule their motions. And here the case is not at all altered; for the tongues of men are as little in thy hands as the mouths of dogs. These do always bark (as a judicious author^o speaks) at those they know not, and it is their nature to accompany one another in those clamours: so it is with the inconsiderate multitude. Since these, therefore, are wholly in another's choice, they fall not under thy deliberation, and therefore are not fit for thy passion. Our anger at him that reproaches us, may make us miserable, but it cannot prevent what he hath in his power. Thou mayest do well, and none can hinder it; but to meet with no opposition is not in thy choice. Do what thou canst, the world may make thee suffer; but do what they can, thou mayest suffer contentedly. A philosopher, they say, comforted himself on this fashion, when his daughter proved a wanton: It is

none of my fault, said he, and therefore there is no reason it should be my misery. If our children be not as we would have them, if we endeavour they should be so, we may comfort ourselves with such arguments as these; "It is in my power to instruct them, but not to make them good: I can do my duty to them, but cannot make them dutiful to me." Consider, I beseech you, what an unreasonable thing it is that we should depend upon the will of other men for our peace, and not upon our own: or, as a great philosopher phraseth it, "That we should have no more reverence to ourselves, than to place our happiness in other men's souls." If they have shewn what is in their hand and power to do, let us next shew what is in ours, and that is, not to be troubled; and so let the matter rest, unless they have a mind to renew a vain attempt. By observing this rule, we shall reap sundry benefits. The censures of men will not molest

▷ —'Εν ταῖς ἄλλων ψυχαῖς τιθεμέναι τὴν σὴν εὐμοιρίαν.—M. Anton. l. ii. sect. 6.

us, because it is no part of our duty that men should speak well of what is well done. That we should have the approbation of others, is not in our choice, and so it is not in our charge. It is not incumbent upon us that nothing we do be not misinterpreted, and wrong apprehended. In doing well is our comfort, and in speaking well of others; this let us mind, and think ourselves no further concerned. It will keep us likewise from intermeddling with other men's business, and engaging ourselves in matters that belong not to us, which breeds men no small trouble. It is our duty to do well, but not censure other men's doings. When the scholars of R. Nechoniah asked him how he prolonged his days to such an age, He answered, "I never sought my own honour by another's disgrace, nor ever spoke evil of another, and was liberal of the goods which God had given me." This was his way to live in quiet, which he thought was the way to live long: but it is too common a fault among us, that we put our hands into other

men's work, and so trouble both ourselves and them also. The business of a subject is to obey his prince, and of a servant to execute his master's commands, &c. But men foolishly disturb the world, by taking upon them the authority of calling their prudence in question, and finding fault with that which they have nothing to do withal.

This rids us, likewise, of curiosity, and inquiring into other men's affairs, or matters done abroad, which, as the wise man notes, (Ecclesiastes vii. 21.) may occasion some disquiet unto us, unless we relieve ourselves at last by this rule; whereby we might have found help at first, by not hearkening to private talk.



CHAPTER VI.

TWO RULES MORE CONCERNING THE CHOICE OF
MEANS, AND CARELESSNESS ABOUT EVENTS.

III. *In the doing of thy duty, make a prudent choice of the fittest means.* Prudence is proper to a man ; for angels have something better, viz. intuition ; and brutes have nothing so good. Do therefore like a man ; be deliberate, and choose discreetly ; which two are opposed unto rashness and carelessness, which are the authors of no small troubles. Prudence saves men a great deal of labour in the doing of their duty, and a great deal of trouble for the doing of it, i. e. it keeps us from being molested either by ourselves or others ; and therefore Solomon bids us not only keep the command, (which is doing of our duty) but also discern time and judgment,^q which relates to our discretion.

^q Ecclesiastes viii. 5, 6.

Some men will bring to pass the same thing which others do but endeavour, with more facility and less noise, because, as the same wise man saith, "Wisdom is better than strength." As far therefore as is lawful, let us become all things to all men, that we may live in peace and quietness, and let us not by a tumultuous handling of any matter, give them an occasion to oppose themselves unto us. Yea, prudence will teach us to let some things alone, and not meddle with them, being either needless or else dangerous. As Diogenes said to a man that desired his letters of commendation, "That thou art a man, every one that sees thee will know; and whether thou beest good or bad, he will soon know that hath any skill to make a difference; but if he have no skill, he will not know thee, though I write a thousand times unto him."^r But when it is fit to do any thing, let us remember that there is a nearer way sometimes to the end of a business, than that

^r Arrian. lib. ii. cap. 3.

which is straight forward, and it will be less trouble to seek it out, than to go on in the ordinary path. The purchase of peace is worth all our study, and if we can obtain it by art and prudent compliances, we shall find that we are gainers by our labour. Rashness and violence sometimes create us more trouble than men would otherwise have brought upon us. We run ourselves into broils and tumults, and kindle flames about us with our own breath, when other men would let us live in peace, and not disturb us. Let us, therefore, not only be innocent, and mean well; but wise also, and manage well.* Next after honesty and integrity, let us study prudence and discretion; so as not to be alike zealous in all things, nor passionate and hasty in any thing: but as St. James saith, "Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."† This prudence is a large thing, and of great use in every action of our life; and therefore it must not

* Ecclesiastes x. 10, 12.

† James iii. 13.

be expected that I speak to every part of it; but I shall conclude this particular with a saying of one of the Hebrew doctors: "There are three sorts of men whose life is no life, misericordes, iracundi, melancholici;^u those that pass by all faults; those that are angry at all, and will pass by none; those that are melancholy, as though they were angry and displeased not only with all others, but with themselves.

IV. When thou hast used thy prudence, *be not solicitous about events.*^v This would be a great preservative against fears of what may happen, and against vexation for what has happened. For to what purpose should we trouble ourselves either with one or the other, when all our prudence and skill cannot help it? Fear, indeed, betrays our succours, and disarms us of our weapons, and makes

^u V. Buxtorf. Lex. Talm. voc. דַּתְחִין.

^v When one bade a friend to Gratilla to send her no relief, because Domitian would take it away, she bravely said, "I had rather he should take it away, than I not send it." Duty, not success, is to be considered.

us run into those dangers which our prudence might have prevented. If we can, therefore, act prudently and discreetly, it supposes that we are not dispirited, and will likewise secure us from so being. And if the doing as well as we can, and as wisely as we are able, will satisfy us beforehand, and make timorousness unreasonable; then so it will satisfy us afterward in cross events, and not let us trouble ourselves with a fruitless repentance. The counsel of the son of Sirach is excellently good, "Do nothing without advice; and when thou hast once done, repent not."^x For I believe most men may say the same which that person did, who had so many strange changes in his life; "If I had not used not to repent of any thing I had voluntarily done, even of that which fell out ill, I had lived altogether miserable."^y Do thy best, therefore, and then leave the success to God.

^x Ecclesiasticus xxxi. 19.

^y Quod si non consuevissem non pœniteri ullius rei quam voluntarie effecerim, etiam quæ male cessisset, prorsus vixissem infelix.—CARDAN.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES, TOGETHER
WITH CONSIDERATION OF THE NECESSARY
CONSEQUENTS OF EVERY THING, ARE TWO
OTHER REMEDIES AGAINST TROUBLE.

V. *Consider thy own sufficiency, and undertake no more than is fitting for thee.* If we did live by this rule, and not strain beyond our ability, we should be kept from trouble in our employments. *As one may,* was a saying of Socrates,^z and a sentence of great import. Let every one know what he can do, and let him not meddle with matters too high for him, and so he may quiet himself; as David tells us by his experience, (Psalm cxxxi. 1, 2.) Let our desires be according

^z Καλὸν τὸ εἰδέναι τὴν αὐτοῦ παρασκευὴν καὶ δύναμιν, ὥς ἐν οἷς μὴ παρασκευάσαι, ἡσυχίαν ἀγῆς, μὴδ' ἀγανακτῆς εἰ τινας ἄλλοι πλεῖον σοῦ ἔχουσιν ἐν ἐκείνοις.—Arrian. 1. ii. cap. 6.

to our power, and let that also be the measure of our actions, and then we shall not implicate and entangle ourselves in things beyond our reach. The pie must not think to sing as well as the nightingale, nor the parrot to talk like a man: every one is not made to govern states, to distribute justice, to resolve great doubts, and to end controversies. Some men must be content to govern their families and themselves, to understand plain truths, and practise them, leaving the rest to men of greater depth and learning. So Siracides directs: "Seek not out things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength. But what is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence; for it is not needful to see with thine eyes the things that are secret." * What he saith in that one instance, may be said in all other. Take not upon thee a calling that is above thy wisdom, and strength, and spirit; for when thou seest thou canst not do those

* Ecclesiasticus iii. 21.

things which by thy place and office thou art engaged unto, it will be a matter of infinite vexation, and endless distraction to thy mind. It is of singular use here for every man to observe his own genius and disposition, and to follow that; being contented to be ignorant of, and unable for other things that are without his capacity. It is enough for such a little creature as a man to be good for one thing, and so we may stand in need of one another. If he will venture upon things without his compass, at his own peril and trouble it must be; and that were the less matter, if it would not hazard other men's trouble also. "Without eyes thou shalt want light," saith that wise man in the fore-mentioned chapter;^b and what wonder is it if thou dost? If men weary themselves in vain, when they have no aptness to such things as they undertake, it is but natural, and may be amended by the old rule, Know thyself. "My son," saith Siracides, "prove thy soul

^b Verse 25.

in thy life, and see what is evil for it, and give not that unto it. For all things are not profitable for all men, neither hath every soul pleasure in every thing.”^c And as an appendix to this rule, give me leave to add this: Employ thyself in as few things as thou canst; undertake not much business. This is the royal philosopher’s rule, “Do but a little, if thou wouldest have much quiet; peace arises not only from good employment, but also from little.”^d mind always needful things, and let the rest alone. Therefore, when we are going to do any thing, let us say, “Is not this in the number of needless things?”^e But then, as he adds, have a care not only to cut off impertinent and unnecessary actions, but thoughts and imaginations also. Our Saviour seems to say the same in the gospel of St. Luke, “Martha, Martha, thou

^c Ecclesiasticus xxxvii. 27, 28.

^d Ὀλίγα πρῆσσε εἰ μέλλεις εὐθυμήσειν, &c.—
M. Anton. l. iv. 24.

^e Μὴ τι τοῦτο οὐ τῶν ἀνάγκαίων.

art careful and troubled about many things.”^f Flies disquiet us not by their strength, but by their number; and so do great affairs not vex so much as a number of businesses of little value. But if we must be employed in many, let us not make too much haste to have done, for we shall but encumber ourselves; and let us dispatch them in due order, one after another, or else we shall do none well to our own content.

VI. *Consider the consequent of every action, and of every thing*; and either chuse all its appendant troubles and inconveniences, or else let it alone. There is nothing in the world but it is as a lily among the thorns; every rose hath its prickles about it; and there is nothing so desirable but it hath some associates we could wish separate from its company. The best thing in the world hath its faults; and, therefore, if we would have peace, let us consider always the τὰ ἀκολουθα, as *Epictetus* speaks, the things that follow or

^f Luke x. 41.

accompany every action, and every condition ; and either let us not choose the thing itself, or else receive all its retinue together with it. By this means we shall save ourselves the trouble of repentance for a foolish choice, and we shall not be put to the unwise man's complaint, *Non putaram*, I never dreamt of this ; I imagined not there had been all these unpleasing things mixed with what I desired. Who should have thought of this but thyself ? How like an idiot dost thou look in thy own thoughts, when thou art thus surprised ? How ridiculous doth it appear for a man to sit down and cry like a child, If I had known thus much, I would never have made such a venture ; I would not have meddled with this calling or business if I had thought there would have been so much trouble in it. Thou shouldest have thought of this before, and then have made this choice. Honour must be chosen, *cum suo onere*, with its suitors and followers, and public appearances, &c. And so marriage must be chosen with all its cares, the diligence of pleasing another, the loss or

undutifulness of children, &c. and so every office, with its incumbrances and difficulties.[†] Yea, the service of God, as well as service of men, must be chosen in the same manner. We must in all our choices take all, or none, or else be miserable. And if we have not had this forehanded care, it is so much the harder to relieve us, because possibly we cannot do or endure all things in which we are necessarily engaged; yet let us resolve to do them as well as we can, and make a virtue of a necessity. If it be not in our liberty to choose our condition, yet let us now resolve to choose all its inconveniences, and make that light by patience and constancy, which cannot otherwise be amended. And, indeed, it is the unhappiness of most men to be involved in many things before they either can or do consider; whereby they are in danger to lead a life full of miseries, unless for the time to come they be better advised before they choose, and find means to content themselves in regard of what is past.


CHAPTER VIII.

IT IS OF GREAT IMPORT TO CONSIDER WELL
WHAT WE ENJOY; AND WE SHOULD CAST
THAT IN THE BALANCE AGAINST OUR WANTS;
WHICH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF ONE RULE MORE.

VII. *Compare what thou hast not with what thou hast, and see which is better.* This will keep thee from trouble for what thou wantest, and thy desires shall not disquiet thee. Tell all the joints of thy body, and compare them with the want of a finger, or an eye, or any such member. Whether is a hundred or one more? Thou art poor, but thou art well, and hast many good friends, &c. or perhaps thou hast none: but thou hast all the host of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, and all the elements; and the providence of God, and the charity of all well-disposed people, as much as another man. Thou mayest walk in thy neighbour's field, yea,

in thy enemy's ground, and enjoy all the pleasures of the morning, and recreate thyself with all the sweet odours, and behold the beauty of all God's creatures, and delight in that which God delights in. Why, then, shouldest thou be so distracted? Thou goest a journey, and art disappointed of thy ends, and dost lose thy labour, but thou escapest thieves and robbers; or villians set upon thee, but they saved thy life, they have not robbed thee of thy land, &c. Thou hast lost a child, perhaps, but how many hast thou remaining? or is not thy husband or wife well? or if they be gone, and thy estate also gone, and thou thyself sick also, and the case be supposed as bad as can be, yet art thou not alive? and what wouldest thou not part withal, rather than die? Thou wilt not, I know, exchange thy hopes of staying in the world for all things else, for they are nothing unto thee, if thou beest not.

But you will say, This is very cold comfort, to consider that a man lives. Think then, further, that there are thousands of good



people that pray for thee every day, and all thy good neighbours pity thee, and will strive to relieve thee: or, if this will not do, consider that though thou wantest temporal things, yet thou enjoyest spiritual. Thou art sick, but thy sins are pardoned, (for to Christ's disciples I speak); or, if they be not, (and I must say something to others) then I say, first, I cannot blame thee that thou art troubled; but then, why dost thou trouble thyself that thou art poor, or sick, or any thing else, but only for this, that thou art a condemned sinner? What should a damned man do with riches? Why dost thou trouble thyself about such little things as the loss of a child, when thou hast lost thy soul? Yea, why art thou troubled more that thou art sick, than that thou art not like to be saved? What folly was it in the man that complained his stocking was rent, and minded not the wound of his leg? one would think the great trouble should swallow up the other, though it cannot cure it; and thou shouldest be most solicitous how to

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get sin pardoned, whether thou dost live or die. But,

Secondly, If thy sin be not pardoned, and therefore thou desirest to be well, yet it is a huge mercy that there is hopes it may be pardoned. And if thou dost understand thyself, thou wouldest not lose these very hopes for all the riches in the world, and the best state of health thou canst imagine. But to return: Suppose thou art a person truly fearing God, but art troubled that thou hast not such sweet friends, and good company, and delightful society, and art not so esteemed and regarded, or hast not the fortune which attends upon others. Yet thou hast thyself, and thou hast a good conscience, and thou hast God, and his Son and Holy Spirit, and the promises of the gospel, and the hopes of heaven, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Which now dost thou judge greater, thy wants, or enjoyments? Such a man who hath deserved of thee, doth not love thee, perhaps, nor regard thee, &c.^b But

^b " *Estne aliquid teipso pretiosus? Nihil inquires. Igitur si tui*

what then? he cannot take away the love of God, nor the love of his children; no, nor thy love to him neither.

Now if it be thus in these, and all other cases, I pray tell me who will pity him that hath many soft pillows whereon to lay his head, and he will needs lay it on a stone? that hath many pleasant places wherein to repose himself, and none will serve him, but he will sit upon a bush of thorns? Surely they are in love with sorrow and melancholy, who enjoy so many blessings and contentments, and will forsake the pleasure of them, to pine away in the company of their wants. Consider, I beseech you, is there more cause to be troubled for the want of those, or to rejoice for the possession of these other? or by what reason shall the absence of some things spoil all the sweetness of those that remain? Why should those be more able to comfort us if we had them, than these we now have?

compos fueris, possidebis, quod nec tu amittere velis, nec fortuna possit auferre."—*Boeth. l. ii. de Consol.*

This is the most manifest cheat of ourselves that can be: No man likes that which is his own; and yet every one thinks that he shall be well pleased in the condition of another man. He thinks that he shall be contented with that wherein the other man is not contented himself.¹ By what argument, I pray you, is this concluded? How foolishly do we suborn our desires and hopes to betray our duty and comfort. If he be not contented in his condition, (but perhaps thinks ours to be better, in which we also are not contented), why should we think to find contentment in it? But if he be content in his estate, then so may we be in ours. What any man is, that every man may be. Therefore, if thou canst not cease complaining, I must advise thee to handle thyself roughly; and when thy mind is troubled, and whines and cries for such and such a bauble, do with it as we do by children when they cry they know not for what, affright

¹ *Quis est ille tam fœlix, qui cum dederit impatientiæ manus, statum suum mutare non optet?—Boethius.*

it with the representation of some terrible thing: shew it the pains of hell; ask it how it likes to burn in eternal flames, and whether it can be contented to be damned? Let it see there is something indeed to cry for, if it cannot be quiet; and bid it tell thee whether it be an easy thing to dwell with everlasting burnings. And when it starts at the thoughts of them, bid it be quiet then, and well pleased if it can fly from such a misery, whatsoever else it do endure.

And to make this consideration the more efficacious, when thou considerest what thou hast, frame to thyself such an apprehension of that thing as thou hast of it when thou dost want it. Understand now what thou dost enjoy, as thou wouldest do if thou didst not enjoy it. Consider how desirable health is to a sick man, or friends to a poor man, &c. and so let them be in thine eyes. Thou wantest plenty, but thou hast enough; thou wantest riches, but thou hast health; thou wantest health, but thy sins are forgiven. Consider,

now, suppose thou wert sick, or thy sins were not pardoned, in what a case wouldest thou then be ? what wouldest thou most complain of, for the want of them, or for the want of the things thou now groanest under ? Answerable to the trouble thou shouldest have in the want of those things, let thy quiet be now in the possession of them : and as thy grief for the want of such things would exceed all that which is in thee at present, for the want of others ; so let thy present thankfulness and contentedness be, that thou wantest them not ; which is another way of making this rule efficacious, *Compare the want of the things thou hast, with the want of the things thou now hast not.*



CHAPTER IX.

TWO CONSIDERATIONS MORE; ONE, OF THE WANTS
OF OTHERS; ANOTHER, OF THE UNCERTAINTY
OF OUR OWN ENJOYMENTS.

VIII. If thou dost consider what thou wantest, and canst not but look upon it, and compare thyself with others, then *compare thyself with all men, and not with a few*: or, secondly, *with the whole condition of those few, and not with some part of it*: and this will be a remedy for the same kind of trouble from discontents, and from envy, with all evils of like nature. First, I say, look upon all men, and thou wilt see there are thousands of persons with whom thou wouldest not for any thing change conditions. By what law, then, is it that thou must needs only gaze above, and take no notice of those beneath? that thou must look on him only who is carried on men's

shoulders, (as one did excellently resemble this folly) and think it is a fine thing to be so mounted, and never think of the poor men that carry him, in whose place thou wouldest by no means stand. Thou art not alone in the condition wherein thou art; yea, there are thousands in a worse, and yet (which is more) they are contented. Down with thy high looks, and stare not only upon the great mountains; be content to take notice a little of those that sit in the vallies, yea, of those that embrace a dunghill. Or, secondly, if thou canst not keep thy eyes off from those great men, then compare thyself with the whole of them, and not with some one piece; and then tell me whether thou wouldest wholly change conditions with them, and be as they are. Are there not many inconveniencies in their condition which thou wouldest not meddle withal? Thou wouldest have his wealth, but not his cares, nor his fears, nor his ignorance, perhaps, and folly; nor wouldest thou be troubled with his vices. To be short, none of you would

have been the rich man in the gospel for all the world : ^k Lazarus, as miserable as he was, would not have been in his case. Nay, you will scarce fancy any man so complete, but there is something or other in ourselves that we fancy more, which we would keep, and have all that he hath too. But why must thou needs have all ? why must every one else be deplumed for to trim thee ? why must none else be pleased but thy own single self ? And besides, seeing there is something in thyself, which thou lovest more than all the world, and wouldest still be that, whatsoever else thou changest ; why cannot that content thee, and give thee rest, seeing it is so much worth to thee ? He that will go about to make an answer to me, will cure himself, unless he resolve to be unreasonable. Let me subjoin this one rule, which tends to the same purpose with the former, and will comprehend all of this kind. Distinguish between real needs and artificial ; i. e. those needs which God

^k Luke xvi.

made, and those which thy own fancy hath created. It is most certain that the needs which God hath made are but few, and soon filled, and God hath made provision for them; therefore, all this kind of trouble flows from thy own fancy, which, if it pleases, can create a thousand necessities to itself, which are indeed none at all; and by the same reason that it makes a thousand, it may create ten times as many; for there are no limits when once we are gone beyond nature and necessity. If these needs, therefore, are a burden to thee, blame nothing but thy own folly, and, by the help of God's grace, seek a cure in thyself. Reduce thyself to nature and real needs, and thou wilt never be troubled about these matters, because thou wilt always have what nature desires; yea, the way to have that, is not to desire any more. So a wise man among the Jews once said, *Quære id quod tibi necessarium est*, &c. "Seek that which is necessary for thee, and leave that which is not necessary: for by leaving to follow that which is

not necessary, thou wilt obtain that which is." I remember that when some blamed Cato, that such a man as he would be in want, (as we speak) he blamed them rather because they could not want, viz. such things as those which are not really needful for us; and I think he might have blamed them also upon this score,—that they were in want, because they thought they were. And if we would but deny ourselves sometimes in unnecessary desires, even when it is in our hands to humour ourselves and gratify our desires, it would be of excellent use; for we must remember, that as long as the things of this world are empty and finite, our trouble will not end by satisfying, but by ceasing our desires.

IX. *Count nothing certain which is without thyself*; and think thy soul, not thy body, to be thyself. Thou mayest be certain of thy own choice, if thou knowest thyself; and thou canst tell what thou wilt do; but thou canst not be certain what will be in the world, or what other men will do; and, therefore, reckon

upon nothing as constant and stable, but thy own resolution, which may be constant if thou pleasest. And this will keep thee from trouble about what thou lovest. When health and riches, and such like things, are gone, then thou canst say, I never made account that they would stay. It was accounted of old a piece of great wisdom to wonder at nothing;¹ and this is the way to it, which thing alone the poet thought was almost enough to make one happy and keep him so.

"Nil admirari propè res est una, Numici,
Solaque, quæ possit facere et servare beatum."

Horatius.

But he will not cease to admire that knows not the nature of things; and he knows nothing, that doth not see they are constant only in inconstancy.

¹ Μηδέν θαυμίζειν.



CHAPTER X.

THREE DIRECTIONS MORE; SHEWING HOW WE SHOULD SHUT THE WORLD OUT OF OURSELVES, AND AVOID SELF-FLATTERY, AND TAKE HEED OF A RASH ANGER AT OUR OWN SELVES.

X. *What is without thee, keep it, as far as it is possible, without thee.* Let many things not come in unto thee, nor do thou go out to them. i. e. Let not them into thy heart by love; and let not thy heart go out to them by desire. Make few things to become a piece of thyself, which are without thyself; for if thou lovest many things of which, as I said before, thou canst not be certain, thou wilt be often troubled at their loss, or at their danger. This rule may serve also to fortify you against the same kind of trouble, (among others) for the relief of which I prescribed the former. Keep but every thing there where it is, and all is safe. If the world change and alter, that

is nothing unto us, if it be not within us. If it have no hold of our hearts, how are we concerned in its various mutations? We shall never suffer together with the world, if it be not a part of us. But if we set open the door, and entertain it; if we embrace it, and let it dwell in us, by our love cleaving to it, then we shall be as it is; and nothing can give us a remedy but the casting of it out again, and setting it where it was, quite out of ourselves. It is a true rule, that no good can bring us any pleasure, but that against whose loss we are prepared. He that is in fear doth not sincerely enjoy; and it is as true, that we shall have no mind to lose that which we love dearly. Now what a miserable case is this, to be troubled with fear while we have a thing, lest we lose it; and to be troubled with grief when it is gone, because we have lost it! But I have taught you how to provide against both these, and against all sudden accidents and changes that are in the world. Keep thyself as thou art: let very little in which is

without: I say very little; because some things press into our hearts, and get into our affections, whether we will or no. We cannot but love some agreeable persons; and there are others whom we ought to love, because of the obligation we have to them. These take such hold of our hearts, that they become a piece of it; and we seem to have lost half of ourselves, when they are gone. Against this there is no remedy but one;—Since they will be within us, let them not take up the best room there. Make them know their place; and keep them below God, and our Saviour, and his precious promises. Do but love thy Creator and Redeemer above all; and thou wilt find fulness and satisfaction there, when the departure of a very dear friend hath made a wide breach, and a great vacuity in thy heart. The next rule also may help to give some relief, if thou dost but use it in good time.

XI. *Do not promise thyself that which God never promised thee.* This heals all the evils

which arise from vain hopes, and cools the anger of those sores which are caused by frustration of our expectations. It is lawful to desire several things which are uncertain, if God see them good for us; but let us not promise to ourselves any of them. Do not enjoy thy friends, or any other good, as if thou hadst a lease of them for thy life. Do not entertain thy thoughts with promises of contentment in such a relation and such a condition, nor of success in such an enterprise; no, though thou goest about it wisely. But promise to thyself pardon of sin, and eternal life, if thou dost thy duty; and the grace of God to help thee for to do it, if thou pray for it, and wilt use it: for all these things God hath promised to give us. Solomon saith, that "the race is not to the swift," &c. "but time and chance happeneth to them all."^m Now because men know not the time when things will alter, and which is worse, promise to themselves those things, as if there were no

^m Ecclesiastes ix. 11.

time nor chance but what they fancy: therefore he saith, "that evil falleth suddenly (and therefore sadly) upon them."ⁿ Hope and fear are two great instruments of our trouble, and we must cure them both, as I have directed in this and the former rule. And if we will hope for any thing, let it be (as I said before) in the days of our sorrow and adversity to support our heaviness, not in the days of prosperity, to please our fancy. We have good things enough, then, to comfort us; and if we will spend our thoughts in airy hopes, we make ourselves miserable two ways: we lose the pleasure of what we have, and never enjoy what we look for. And, therefore, I think he made a good answer, who being asked which man's grief never ceased, said *Cujus cor non acquiescit in præsentibus*, whose heart is not contented with what he hath at present.^o And he likewise was well employed, who for

ⁿ Ecclesiastes 12.

^o — "Habitum nihil sperandi, cui adipsicendo 15, perpetuis annis, maximo labore incubui et obtinui."—*Curdan*.

fifteen years together with great pains endeavoured to get the habit of hoping for nothing; especially since, (as he saith) he did obtain it; for no question he found a great ease to his spirit by it.

XII. *Think that thou art most angry at thyself when thou dost amend.* Many create themselves no small trouble by being troubled at the disorder and disquiet of their spirit in cross accidents. And I give this rule to take off all that trouble which proceeds from displeasure against ourselves for our unquietness under God's hand, or that trouble which we feel for the sins we have admitted, if it hinder our duty. And this, indeed, is oftentimes the greatest inquietude and trouble of all other. Men roll their souls in very vexatious and impatient thoughts, because they were vexed and impatient; and so they commit that again which they should cure; and unless they will cease it, the disease will grow more desperate. For they are impatient if their trouble be not cured, and their disease instantly healed.

But, alas ! this which they take for the medicine is the very disease. Trouble doth but make the sore rankle and fester the more, and inflame the fever to a greater heat. Therefore coolly and mildly seek to amend thy trouble by some of the former rules that I have proposed. Remember, the more thou vexest thyself, the further thou art from being healed ; and, like a bird that is restless in a net, thou art more entangled and perplexed. Go, therefore, seriously always and considerably about the cure, when thou art troubled at any accident, and think that this is a signification of the greatest displeasure against thyself when thou art amended, and thy mind is again in peace. You may see how calmly David argues himself into a stillness, “ Why art thou cast down, O my soul,” *p* &c. If he had fretted at this disquiet which was in him, and raised storms against himself, the commotion would but have been like a new boisterous wind upon the face of the sea already troubled, which

would but make it more rough and restless.
Let the sun shine, rather than the wind blow :
I mean, with a clear understanding labour
placidly to compose and appease thy heart,
and not by fresh gusts of black passion bluster
and rage against thyself.



CHAPTER XI.

HUMILITY AND SELF-ANNIHILATION; KNOWLEDGE
AND JUDGMENT; SIMPLICITY AND PURITY;
CONSTANCY AND FIXEDNESS IN ONE THING:
ARE FOUR EXCELLENT MEANS TO KEEP US
FROM TROUBLE.

THERE are three or four rules that are more general and universal, which perhaps may serve instead of all the rest for to heal all troubles from without; which, because they are so large and comprehensive, I will superadd.

I. *Have a little esteem of thyself.* *Superbus et avarus nunquam quiescunt*, says a devout author; † A proud man and a covetous man never are at rest. The leaves of the tall trees shake with every breath; and no man can open his mouth to whisper an ill word, but a proud man is disturbed. Whereas the observance of this rule will make us say, when

† Thomas a Kempis.

we are contemned and despised, that they cannot think so low of us, as we of ourselves, and then we shall not be moved. It will help us in poverty, sickness, and all misfortunes, whilst we say, Less than the least of all God's mercies. Our conceit sure of ourselves is the cause that we quarrel at every thing that happens, as if we were such considerable creatures, that every thing must be done to please us, and God must rule the whole world according to our humour; yea, and nobody else must be served and gratified but ourselves. Some things there are which fall out that are good for others when they are ill to me; and therefore it is a high piece of pride for me to be troubled, as if I were such a goodly thing that God should mind none but me; and all creatures in heaven and in earth should wait upon me, doing every thing according to my liking.

Away with this fond love of ourselves, and ridiculous overweening. I beseech you let us know ourselves, and all will be well. There

is no reason that such poor things as we are should take matters so ill and unkindly at God's hands as we do. We are well used, if we were in a worse condition.

II. *Labour to understand the true nature and value of every thing.* I will instance in a few things. That which is future is uncertain; that which is born may die; that which once was not, may again not be; what hath happened to others, may happen to me; that which hath its value from fancy, is not much worth; that which can be bought, cannot be great; that which can do us no harm unless we will, need not be feared; that which a man can live without, he need not covet. Such like rules as these will the consideration of the nature of things teach us; and then, when we have learned what they are, let us remember the usual saying of Epictetus, "If thou lovest a pot, remember it is a pot which thou lovest;" i. e. a thing of a base nature, and also brittle, and soon broken; and it is no great wonder, nor no great matter, if it be. So in all other

cases, if thou lovest a flower, or a man, remember it is but a flower, but a man. If thou hopest for any thing, remember thou hast but only hopes. And thus doing, thou wilt find much quiet from many occasions of trouble.

III. *Have but one end, and bring all things to that*: which in the great emperor's phrase is thus expressed; "Ἀπλῶσον σεαυτόν, Reduce thyself to a simplicity.¹ The true end, and that which is the greatest, is such an one that all things will promote it; and that end is the glorifying God, and saving our souls. Whatsoever falls out will advance this; and if we secure our end, what need we be troubled? "We may always have what we would, if we would not have too many things, but only one."² For nothing can hinder our doing God honour, and advancing the good of our souls: yea, without those things that we account sad,

¹ M. Anton, l. 4.

² Τὶς εἶναι θέλεις σαυτῷ πρῶτον εἰπε, εἰθ' οὕτω ποίει ἃ ποιεῖς.—*Arrian*. l. 2. c. 23.—Tell thyself first what thou wilt be, and then do all things that thou mayest be what thou wouldst.

sometimes we should not attend that end. So David said, It was good that he was afflicted, else he had gone astray. Howsoever it fares with us, there is some grace or other to be exercised; and the exercise of every one of them is in order to what we design, God's glory and our good. Remember, therefore, what our Saviour saith, "Thou art careful about many things, but one thing is needful."† Mind that, and thou needest not be troubled, because thou mayest alway mind it. The sum of this is, He that hath proposed but one great end at which he levels all his actions, the obtaining of which nothing can hinder, but all things promote, and which he may alway in every condition pursue, need not be troubled. For every thing rests satisfied in its end; and this he may always have, if it be that which it should be.

As we should have but one end, so let us have but one rule or principle of our lives. I know you will be glad to hear what that one

† Luke x. xli.

rule should be. I cannot tell how to comprehend it in shorter words than these; "Let us alway will, and not will the same thing." I told you in the first rule of all, that we must acquaint ourselves with the gospel. Now let us will only those things that Christ hath commanded, and refuse only those that Christ hath forbidden; and that is the principle whereby we may guide our lives, and it will never fail us. The truth is, that must needs be good, which a man can always will; and it is impossible that any thing but what hath no evil in it, should never cease to be chosen by us. Let us resolve, therefore, what things we will ever choose, and what we will ever refuse; and for the rest, let them be as they will. Now Christ hath said, Be holy, humble, meek, patient; but no where hath he said, Be rich, be honoured, or the like. The former, therefore, and not these, we must always will. He hath bid us likewise, that we should not speak evil of others, nor hate them, nor return their injuries; but no where hath he said, Do not

suffer affliction, do not put up those wrongs, &c.; the former, then, are the things only that we must will not to do. And by this course it is manifest what a great way we shall go to the obtaining peace. For we shall always be certain of something. When a man's estate is gone, and his friends deceased, or the like, he may say, but I am here still, and I can do what I always could: choose the good, and refuse the evil. I never did will not to be poor, nor to be destitute of relations, nor to suffer reproaches. There are other things that I make the matter of my choice; and I find that I am where I was, because I can do those things which are the only things which I choose to do. This will fortify us against what men say of us. Follow scripture and reason, and let the world approve of what we do if they please. Nothing more troubles us than an ambitious desire of every one's good word; but *Haud parum artis opus est, si quis stulto placere velit*, saith the proverb among the Spaniards; He shall have enough to do that would please a fool. But how much trou-

ble he shall have that would please nobody knows how many of them, is not to be imagined. He must not will one thing, but ten thousand ; one thing this moment, and another the next, and innumerable contradictions at the same time to please divers men. Content thyself therefore with this, God is sooner pleased than men ; resolve upon his will to let that be thine ; and keep to it. Choose that which nobody can hinder, no accident can forbid ; if thou cannot do God's will, thou canst suffer it ; why then shouldest thou be troubled, when thine own choice remains entire, and thou hast what thou wouldest ?



CHAPTER XII.

A CAUTION, AND THE CONCLUSION; SHEWING THAT THESE THINGS SUPPOSE THE PRACTICE OF SOME MORE GENERAL RULES; AND THAT WE MUST NOT HAVE THESE TRUTHS TO GET, WHEN WE HAVE NEED OF THEM.

To prevent all misunderstanding, I must desire you to consider, that all these rules are such, as suppose the use of some other, that have an universal influence upon all Christian practice, and these must be joined with them, not severed from them. As first, Prayer.^u Secondly, Giving thanks in every thing.^v Thirdly, Meditation of heaven and eternal blessedness.^w Fourthly, of God's fulness, and the glories of his attributes.^x Fifthly, of Christ's death and

^u See Philippians iv. 6, 7. ^v 2 Corinthians iv. 17, 18.

^w Psalm xxxi. 19, xlii. 11. ^x Hebrews ii. 17, 18.


intercession, with such like ;^γ to all which religious exercises, if we add those rational and natural considerations, we may be well eased.

The truth is, there are no such cordials as those of the Christian Religion. Nothing can support and comfort us so speedily and substantially as the belief that God was manifested in our flesh, and therefore hath a singular love to us and care of us : that the Lord Jesus is exalted at the right hand of God ; and that we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones : that he hath great a great compassion to us ; and both power and will to relieve or sustain us : that we suffer nothing but what he himself did ; and are in the way to that glory where he dwells : and that he will certainly reward our patience, submission, and resignation to him, with endless joys. These things we must always have in our eye and in our heart. On these foundations we must lay the weight of our souls : which will quiet

^γ See Hebrews iv. 15, 16.

our desires, and banish our fears, and cut off vain hopes, and restore our very reason to a greater clearness and strength. So that we shall be the better able to use all other helps, for the curing all the diseases we labour under.

What remains then but our hearty endeavour thus to settle and compose ourselves? I told you at the entrance that these rules are not like to physic, that will cure us without our thoughts and consideration: so now I must further remember you, that we must not think to take this course as some men likewise do physic, just when the distemper is upon us, but when we are well and in quiet. When the trouble once is begun, and the disease hath seized upon our spirits, it is not so easily cured, and we cannot so well consider, nor apply these lessons to our minds; therefore we must use them as we do food, which we take every day to keep us in health, and not as physic, which we take but at certain times, when we find the humour stirring; i. e. we must work our souls



to such kind of reasonings and discourses as these are, we must bring our minds to such a way of thinking as I have described, and make these rules so familiar to our minds, that they may be a part of our understanding, and a piece of our reason, not some foreign things to which we run for relief upon occasion of need. We must strip our souls of their former conceits, and clothe them with these notions. We must root out these weeds of bitterness, high esteem of ourselves, and of worldly things, earthly love, unreasonable desire, fond hopes and expectations, rashness and inconsideration ; and plant in their stead such good principles as now have been commended to you, and take care that they grow up there. The government of the soul must be altered from the rule of popular opinions, and the tyranny of fancies and imaginations, to the sole command of Christian reason. In this great alteration let us engage all our forces. Think how shameful it is to get all knowledge, and not to know ourselves, nor how to enjoy

ourselves ; and how miserable he is that encompasses all the world, and searches into all things, only neglects his own peace, or seeks it among the occasions of his trouble. Discharge thyself, therefore, with all speed, of thy passions, of rashness and hasty thoughts. Learn thy duty, do it, know God, and thyself, and the world ; and when thou art once humble, prudent, thankful, and heavenly-minded, thou wilt not be displeased at what God or men do ; nothing will trouble thee ; or if any thing do, it will be this, that thou doest these things no better, and art no more perfect in thy art. But this is the happiness of such a man's condition, that those who mourn shall be comforted ; and it is a pleasure to be so troubled ; an ease to the mind, to be so aggrieved. No joys here, like those of an ingenuous sorrow ; no cup of blessing so sweet, as that which is mingled with tears of true contrition for our ingratitude. With a good saying, therefore, of a wise Doctor among the Jews, I will conclude, who seeing a man very sad and sorrowful, thus addressed

his speech to him, "If thy grief be for the things of this world, I pray God diminish it: but if it be for the things of the world to come, I pray God increase it."



A
CONSOLATORY
DISCOURSE,
TO
PREVENT IMMODERATE GRIEF
FOR THE
DEATH OF OUR FRIENDS.



A
CONSOLATORY DISCOURSE,
&c.

SECTION I.

WHEREIN IS SHEWN THE NERD OF A CONSO-
LATORY DISCOURSE AGAINST THE LOSS OF
OUR FRIENDS.

IT is left upon record by St. Hierom concern-
ing Paulina, that though she was a lady, whose
passions were under admirable government in
other things, yet when any of her children
died, she was oppressed with so great a sorrow,
that he had much ado to save her from being
drowned in the floods of it. But it is not so

great a wonder that a person of the tenderer sex should feel such a tempest, as that David, a man of war, who had overcome so many enemies, should himself be overcome with grief for a disobedient son. It is said that a Lacedæmonian woman having sent five sons to a battle, stood at the gates of Sparta to expect the event: and when she met one coming from the camp, she asked him what was done. "All thy five sons," said the man, "are slain." "Away, thou fool," answered she again, "I inquired not of this, but of the issue of the fight." When he told her that her countrymen had got the better; "then farewell my sons," said she, "and let us rejoice that Sparta is saved." But David it seems had not attained to this feminine courage, for he sate between the gates^z waiting for news of success, and when he heard of the loss but of one son, and he a traitor to his country, he could not contain himself till he came into the house, but went up to the chamber over the gate^a to lament his son, as though he had

^z 2 Samuel xviii. 24.

^a Ibid. 33.

lost the day by losing him. Nay, he could not refrain so long till he came into the chamber, but he watered the stairs with his tears, and wept as he went up, saying, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

This lamentation of his cannot but call to mind the tears which Achilles, another great warrior, shed over the grave of his friend Patroclus, where *σμερδαλέον δ' οἴμωξεν*, (as Homer speaks), he wept most horribly, as if he would have killed himself.

This love is such a powerful thing, that if it hath placed any object in our heart, we can scarce suffer it to be taken from us, without rending and tearing our hearts in pieces. Such a strange union doth it make between two persons, that we can scarce give that man any welcome that brings us the news of a separation. And therefore some of the ancient Carthaginians, (as I remember) knowing how hard it is to love those who bring us the

tidings of the death of them that we love, would never send such a message but by the hand of some condemned man, whom they were never like to see again. I am ready here to interrupt my discourse, and in the very beginning to fall into a passion with myself, when I think how patiently we can suffer our souls to be divided from God whom we pretend to love. O Love! how great things should we do if we did but love! how angry should we be at the temptation which would draw him from us whom our souls love!

Antonius Guevara had a niece who was so passionately in love with a little bitch, that at the death of it she fell into a fever, and was fain to keep her bed.^b The good man did well rather to chide, than to comfort her; and to write a satire, rather than a consolatory letter to her; but yet in that strange passion of hers, we may clearly see how incident it is unto us to take heavily the loss of what we love.

^b Epist. ad famil. pars. 2.

Now, there is no greater love than that which is between near kindred and friends, and no man that knows the pleasure of it, would dissuade any from such love ; and yet it is necessary that we should not mourn for them as if we loved nothing else, which will render it perhaps an acceptable piece of service unto some, if I endeavour to ease them of this kind of sorrow ; and though I have touched but lightly upon other maladies, in the foregoing treatise, yet I apply some particular plaisters to this great and general sore.



SECTION II.

WHEREIN IS SHOWN THAT WE MAY GRANT NATURE LEAVE TO EASE ITSELF BY MODERATE TEARS; AND TWO ADVICES ARE GIVEN TO KEEP US FROM MAKING AN ILL USE OF THIS GRANT.

YOU must not think that it is in my design to take away your trouble, by taking you off from all love and friendship; for that would be as ridiculous as the device to cure drunkenness by cutting up all the vines. I would not have a man to love none but himself, out of a fear that he should be troubled at the loss of them, as much as at the loss of himself. This would be to cure one evil by a greater, and to ease men of a short trouble, by letting them want the constant easement and sweetest comfort of our lives, which is our friends. Neither do I intend to write like a Stoic, and stupify all your passions, so that you should not mourn at all,

for that is an impossible thing, if we have any love. Grace doth not root out nature, nor quite dry up all our tears ; but it rather makes our hearts more moist and tender, and causes it to express itself in a becoming affection unto others, as David and that lady may teach us. They are sturdy, not generous, that are void of all grief ; they are rather hard than constant, rather unexperienced than reasonable, that forbid all sadness. But it is my design to bring you to a moderation both in love and in sorrow, that you may do as much as becomes good friends, but no more than becomes good men. Not to be sensible of evils, is not to be men ; not to bear them patiently, is not to be Christians. It is neither to be hoped nor to be desired that we should shed no tears at all ; but it is both necessary and attainable, that we should let them flow in measure. *Lacry-mandum est, sed non plorandum.*^c We may weep, but we must not wail and lament. We must be natural, but we must be also reason-

^c Seneca, Epist. 63.

able; we must approve ourselves both to men and unto God; that they may see we are loving friends, and that he may see, we are his dutiful children. *Est enim quædam et dolendi modestia.* For there is a certain modesty even in mourning, and it is as unseemly to weep immoderately, as it is not to weep at all.

And let none think that by this concession unto nature and decency, the wound will be made incurable; and that it is easier not to mourn at all, than to mourn moderately. These are but the dreams of heavy souls, that think that none can stand still, but they that are resolved never to stir. It is said, indeed, that we may more easily abstain from a thing of which we never tasted, than refrain from it after a little acquaintance. But this must be understood of pleasure, and not of grief. When we have mourned a little, we shall soon see that there is neither pleasure nor profit in our mourning. Or if any one shall think it to be some pleasure, yet it will, notwithstanding, be easily moderated; because it is only the pleasure

of being eased of our loads that oppressed us, not of being satisfied with the pressure of any delightful object. It is but the letting out of sadness, not the bringing in of any pleasure; and therefore, when the heart is once eased of its burden, it will soon be persuaded to mourn no more; for that will be the bringing upon us a new burden.

But then, on the other side, as we may grant something unto nature, so we must be sure not to let it work alone. That we may weep moderately, it will be necessary to make resistance to our sorrows, and muster up all the consolatory arguments that are repositied in our minds. Nature will do its part without our help. We need not study how to weep enough, nor use any arguments to persuade ourselves into tears. It is a superfluous employment to strive to magnify our loss; for fancy is apt to make it bigger than it is. It is a foolish trouble to be careful how to mourn, for tears will flow from us without any bidding. All our work must be to stop their passage as


fast as we can, and to make them flow leisurely, not gush forth with too great a violence. Our reason and religion must be called up in all haste, to make as strong a dam as we are able to our sorrow; or else, if it have its course, it may overflow us.

He is a base pilot that leaves his tackling in a storm, and suffers his ship to run along with the tempest; and no less ignoble and abject is his spirit, that permits himself to the gusts and hurricanes of his own passions, and lets them drive him whither they, and not whither he himself pleases. But it is a degree of madness to use reason itself to make the blasts more terrible, and when the storm is too furious, by art and skill to conjure up more boisterous passions. Who would pity him that sets his reason against himself, and studies how to be as miserable as his mind can make him? We need not be so in love with grief, as to create it to ourselves. Nature, as I said, knows how to mourn without our teaching. We had need think rather how to bear our

natural troubles, than how to lay more upon our shoulders.

But if we will make any opposition, we must begin before our passions are too strong. They are too powerful of themselves, and we must not let them gather more strength by our negligence. If we do not at the very first set ourselves in a posture of defence against them, they will seize upon our whole soul, and get every thing into their possession. As soon, therefore, as our grief stirs, we must strive to comfort ourselves, and not either help forward or suffer our grief. If we go and bewail our friends as much as we can, and think to cheer our souls afterward, we shall soon find that our souls are drowned with a flood, and that it will be a long time before it be soaked up. When we give the least leave to these passions, they will ask no leave of us afterward; but the soul will mourn like Rachel, and refuse to be comforted. As soon, therefore, as thou hearest of the death of thy friends, do not spend the time in bemoaning

thyself, saying, Alas! what a friend have I lost! did ever any man part with such a person? where shall I find one comparable to him in wisdom, in love, in faithfulness, in all manner of sufficiencies to make a friend? Do not, I say, after this sort stand to aggravate thy grief; but instantly say, Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? why should I trouble and torment myself with my own thoughts; why should wind and tide run together; how many reasons have I to be contented? and spread them all before thine eyes, that they may dry up thy tears and cease thy sorrow. Labour, at least, that these thoughts may tread upon the heels of the other; and, as soon as may be, overtake them, and get the mastery of them. And so doing, thou wilt weep as much as is fit, but no more than thou oughtest. Nature will be satisfied, and thou thyself not ashamed. None will think that thou art not grieved, and thou wilt feel that thy heart is comforted.



SECTION III.

WHICH SHEWS RATHER WHAT MIGHT BE SAID,
THAN WHAT IS SAID IN THIS PRESENT TREATISE
FOR MODERATING OUR SORROW. BUT YET THOSE
EXAMPLES WHICH WE HAVE FROM OTHERS MAY
MOVE US TO FOLLOW THEIR RULES, AND SO A
BRIEF TOUCH IS MADE UPON THEM.

BUT what comforts are these (may some say)
which you bring us? with what reasons will
you assist us?

I suppose it will be of no great effect to
answer, that the wisest persons have made
their mourning short and moderate; because
I have already named two both good and wise
that were excessive. And therefore I must
endeavour to make men thoroughly wise,
and furnish them with such reasons as will
not suffer them to be oppressed with their
sorrows. Yet methinks it is observable, that
the Egyptians mourned ten times as long as

the children of Israel. Seven days ordinarily contented the people of God for their grief, (as you may see, Ecclesiasticus xxii. 12. Job ii. 13) whereas they that were strangers to the God of Israel, extended their mourning seventy days, as you may read, Genesis l. 3; yea, the greatest mourning that the Israelites used for their two famous leaders, Moses and Aaron, was prolonged but to thirty days,^d which is not half the time that those heathens allowed. I think not fit either to pass by the shortness of Abraham's grief for his dearest wife Sarah, who died, as some of the Jews conjecture, for very grief when he was at Mount Moriah, thinking that her son was offered. This they gather from that expression, Genesis xxiii. 2, "Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." From whence it was that he came I have nothing to affirm; yet this note of theirs is considerable, that in the Hebrew word [to weep for her] there is a small Caph in the middle of great letters,

^d Numbers xx. 29. Deuteronomy xxxiv. 8.

which may very well shew, they think, that his weeping was little and moderate, and not of the greatest size. That expression is likewise taken notice of by some, which follows in the next verse, "He stood up from before his dead;" as if it signified, that he turned his eyes from her, that so he might not be overcome with grief. We must not love to look on our losses; nor think that it becomes us to weep as long as we can. But we should learn by the manner of God's people, to do all we can to make our mourning short. Yea, I might teach you from heathens themselves, if examples would do us any good. Lycurgus ordained that none should weep above eleven days; and that they should make no funeral solemnities.* Solon likewise took them away, that so he might ease men of those howlings and lamentations, which they used to make at their friends' interment.^f Augustus, as Seneca observes, though he lost all his children and

* Plutarch. in Lycurg.

^f Ἄνδρα καὶ γυναῖκάδεα πύθη.—Plut. in Solone

nephews, and was fain to adopt an heir, yet he was so little moved at their death, that he constantly went to the senate, and neglected no public affairs. Pericles likewise, having lost two sons of great hope, within the compass of eight days, put on notwithstanding a white garment, and with a great constancy of mind went to deliberate about the necessities of the commonwealth.

All stories are full of such great souls, that after they had conquered others, at last conquered themselves also. I know it will cure no man to tell him that his neighbour was cured; yet these examples do commend to us the remedies which they used, and give us hopes that our griefs are not incurable.



SECTION IV.

WHICH TEACHES US TO CONSIDER WHAT DEATH IS: FIRST, COMMON; SECONDLY, NECESSARY; THIRDLY, GOOD. AND IF WE THOUGHT MORE OF IT, WE SHOULD NOT BE UNWILLING TO PART, NEITHER DOETH THE MANNER OF PARTING MAKE ANY CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE.

THE cure of this distemper doth lie chiefly in a fulness of considerations, wherewithal our minds must be stored. Nothing can resist grief but a great mind; no mind can be great that is not big with truth; nothing can impregnate us with truth but serious advice and consideration in ourselves; and therefore we must provide ourselves with sufficient antidotes that may be ready at hand when we have need of them. Our souls must be as an apothecary, and our hearts must be the *'Αποθήκη*, or shop where all medicines are in a readiness against any grief or malady that shall invade us. If we

have our remedies to gather, and to compound when our sickness comes, the mind will be so weak that it will not be able to make them. We have least power to consider when we are full of sorrow; our affections are ready to overlay our reasons, and therefore we must have our medicines made before, that then we may have nothing else to do, but only to take them. And we shall find that to have so much labour in it (our stomachs being squeamish and nauseating) that we shall clearly see we need have nothing else to do.

First, then, *let us seriously consider, What is it that we grieve for?* It is soon answered, that we mourn for the death of those that we love. For their death? What is that, I beseech you? Is death such a strange and unusual thing that we should take it heavily? Are your friends the first that ever died? Are you the only persons that God hath singled out to be left alone? Do you not see that every thing in the world can cause death? The wind, the lightning, the fire, the

smoke, the dust of the earth, the water, our meat and drink, our own passions, our joy, our sorrow, and a thousand other things can bring us to our graves. Why then should it be lamented, as if it were some wonder at which all the world should be astonished? Men fill the air with sighs, they beat the heavens with their groans, they clothe themselves with darkness, and they pour out floods as in a tempest. Why, what is the matter? Is the sun fallen from its orb? are all the lights of heaven extinguished? are they carrying out the world's funeral? What is it, then, that causes this moan? A friend is dead. There is one man less in the world than there was. O wonderful! what a prodigy is this! One that was born to die, is dead! It had been a wonder indeed, if he had not died. Then we might have filled the earth with noises. Then there had been some cause for a tumult. But now it is rather a wonder that men should make such a stir at an ordinary and common thing, than that a thing so common should happen

unto them. One would rather look to see no tears, than no death; and we might more easily excuse their not weeping at all, than we can those doleful lamentations.

Is it not necessary that our friends should die? yea, it is so necessary, that it is a thing past, and cannot be recalled, when men weep most for it. If you can bring them back again with your tears, if there be any hopes that with the noise you make they should revive to comfort you; then you have leave to weep as much as you please. Is there any Elijah or Elisha that can stretch forth themselves upon them, and recover them to their warmth? Is there any Paul or Peter, or such great men, that can raise them from the dead? Go, then, and entreat them for to pity you. Beat your breasts, tear your hair, break your sleep with sorrow, macerate yourselves with fasting, that they may take some compassion upon you. But if all this pains be lost, never put yourselves into it; but say, Why should I have my labour for my pains? And did not all

those men die again that they raised? Were they made immortal here upon the earth? What good would it do you to have them called to life again, if they must again die? How would you be able to part with them then, if not now? What an uncomfortable life would you lead out of fear every day to fall into the same sadness? How desolate would you be even in their company, unless you learned not to be troubled nor distracted? And if that must be learned, then let us learn it now when it is as necessary as it would be then. Do you take it ill that the apple rots, and your trees decay, and your clothes grow bare, and that any thing in this world is according to its nature? Why then do you bewail it with such passion that men die, which is as natural to them as it is to be born? Would you have God make the world anew for your sakes? Will you not be contented unless he make a mortal thing immortal? Is it not sufficient that you know it must die, and that he gave it to you that it may be returned to him again?

Did he ever promise you how long you should have it? May he not call for his own when he thinks good? Do not other men pay this debt to nature as well as you?

Seeing, then, it is both a common and a necessary debt, do not repine as if you did only pay it. He is an unworthy debtor, that returns what is lent with a reproach to his creditor. And therefore give it up cheerfully; perhaps he may entrust you with something better. While David saw that his child was alive, he earnestly besought of God that it might not die; ⁸ but when once it had given up the ghost, he anoints his head, and puts on other garments, because he knew God was not bound to work a miracle, though he might be inclined to shew mercy. While there was life, there was some hope of mercy: but when it was dead, there was no hope of a miracle.

And yet there is one thing that may be pertinently observed in that story of David, which exceedingly argues our folly. Though



God had said by a prophet, that his child should die, yet he earnestly begged that it might live. Men are not so earnest for that which they may be assured God will do if it concern their souls, as they are for that which they have all reason to fear he will not do if it concern their bodies. Men would have him recal his word, and alter his decrees in temporal matters; but they little mind the obtaining of his promises, and the fulfilling of his word in spiritual concernments. They would have life as long as they please, which they know he will not bestow, but they seek not for contentment which they may be assured he hath a mind to give. They would have him willing to let them enjoy their friends always, which cannot be; but they seek not to him, that they may be willing to part with them, though they must part with them, and he would make them willing.

For shame let us not continue in this kind of folly, to be angry at things necessary which we cannot avoid, and to neglect those necessities which we cannot want.

And since death is such a common thing, and so easy to be met with, that every thing in the world may bring it to us ; let us further consider, that it cannot be very hurtful in itself, for all such things are more unusual and rare. God is not so unkind unto the world as to let the most noxious and poisonous things grow every where in the greatest plenty. Things of that nature are but thinly scattered through the world ; they lie hid, and dare not commonly appear. Since death, therefore, is in every thing, since it lurks not for us like a serpent in the grass, but the smallest thing in this world may strike us with it ; let us verily persuade ourselves, that there is no such great harm in it as we imagine ; especially considering that there is another life.

I am sure that some as wise as we that mourn so much, have thought that death was the best thing that befalls the sons of men ; and if we do not think so, it is because we think not of death itself. It is a common story which Pindar was first author of, how

that Agamedes and Trophonius, having built the Temple of Apollo, asked a reward of that God for their service.^b He promised that after seven days he would pay them well for their pains ; at the end of which they both died in the midst of a sleep. This the world believed was a lesson to them, that God could do men no greater favour than to take them out of the miseries of life. Not long after this Pindar himself exemplified the same truth that he had taught. For when by the ambassadors of Bœotia, he asked the oracle, What was the very best thing that could befall men? the answer was, that Pindar knew well enough, if he did not lie when he wrote the story of Agamedes :ⁱ but if he doubted, he should shortly know what it was. This he interpreted to signify his death, which within a few days after happened.

But perhaps we are not of this mind ; and I need not go to an oracle to know the reason, which is plainly this ; We are acquainted with

^b Plutarch. ad Apollon. ⁱ Vide etiam Suidam in voce Pindar.

no other life but this. If the world had not so much of our hearts, we should not find any fault with the necessity of death, because it would become desirable. We should not then be so sorry for our friends' departure, as for our own stay. We should be glad that neither they nor we were necessitated to dwell there always, where there are so many troubles, that he is happiest who is soonest freed from them.

But there were many that thought not much of the goodness of death, who yet were comforted with the bare thoughts of necessity. How many heathens might I tell you of who fled to this one truth for refuge, and found protection under it against the assaults of sorrow? Nothing is happened to me, but what happeneth to all. The first minute that we began to live, we began to die. This is not the first, but the last moment of death. It is now finished, but it was born when we were born.

When one came and told Anaxagoras in the midst of a lecture that his child was dead,

“Hold thy peace,” said he; “I knew that I begat a son that was mortal;” and so proceeded in his discourse without any accents of grief, or a mournful tone. And so another said to his friend when he saw him weeping for his wife, I thought you had known that you married *a woman*, and not *a goddess*. Do but remember then what the thing is that thou lovest, and thou must be willing either to leave, or not to love it. As they used to stand behind them that triumphed, and admonish them, You are but mortal men; so let us say to ourselves when love is in its greatest flames, *Θνητὸν φιλῶ*,^j I love a dying person. What hurt is there while we embrace and kiss a child, to say *Ἀυριον ἀποθανῆ*, to-morrow it may die? and so to discourse with our friends: to-morrow either you or I may go away, and never thus embrace any more. Doth it make our love the less? doth it make us avoid their presence? No; therefore we are so greedy of of our friends’ society, because we know not

^j Arrian. l. iii. cap. 24.

how long we may enjoy them. It makes love more fervently desirous to have all of them now, because it knows that it may have none of them ere it be long. It teaches us to use their friendship to the best advantages we can, because we are not like to have the use of it as long as we please. The knowledge of our departure doth not part friends now, but makes them cleave the closer until they depart. Let us be willing they should die, and that will not abate of our love; for we cannot be willing until we have loved them as much as we can. We shall be loath they should go without the best testimonies of our love, and that will make us only improve our time to have the benefit of them, and they of us. Seneca tells in one of his letters,* that he who gave a great deal of good counsel to others not to grieve, was himself almost made an example of one overcome with grief. But the truth of it is, saith he, there was no other cause of that mourning which I must now condemn, but

* Epist. lxiii.

only this, I did not use to think that my friend might die before me. I only had in my mind that he was younger, much younger than myself; whereas, I ought to have added, What is this to the purpose? Though he ought, I imagine, to die after me, yet he may die before me. Because I did not thus meditate, I received a stroke when I was unarmed, which went to my heart. But now I think both that all things are mortal, and that there is no certain order of mortality. That which may be at all, may be to-day. And if you think that your friend may die to-day, then why do you not begin to mourn, since his death is at hand, unless you mean to take it patiently when it comes? If you will lament the death of your friends so sadly, why do you not prepare your lamentations, seeing death may be so near? If you think it is not so near, then it is likely your sorrow will be violent when it comes, because sudden. If you think it is, and yet do not mourn, then why should you lament that so sadly at night, which you did not weep

for at all at noon ? There were some creatures they say in Pontus, whose life lasted but one day ; they were born in the morning, and came to their full growth at noon, and grew old in the evening, and at night died. If these animals had been masters of the reason that we have, would they have lamented after our fashion ? would they have mourned for one that chanced to die at noon, when as it could not live longer than night ? No, that which is necessary, it is no great matter when it comes. And because we are of a longer life, our trouble at death is not to be the greater, but the less ; for it is a greater wonder that we did not die many days ago, than that we die to-day.

But some will say, that it is not death itself, but the kind of death, that so troubles them. They could have been contented, if he had gone out of the world another way. But I beseech you, do you know what will please yourselves ? Can you tell what sort of death it is that would content you ? Are there any that do not blame their hard fortune, and wail

and mourn as if none were so miserable? Are not men equally troubled if one die of a fever, and another of a consumption, if their love be equal? It is very plain, that he that persuades himself to part with his friends, will not grieve for the manner of the parting. He that can overcome himself in the greater cause of grief, will not suffer the less so easily to overcome him. And therefore you see that men have always something to find fault withal. If a friend die in a far country, then they say, Alas! that we should not see him before he died! how sad is it that we should not take our leave? If he die at home, then they say, who could endure to hear his groans? how sad was it to see him in the agonies of death? If he die and speak nothing, then they say, O if he might but have told us his mind, if he had left us any remembrances, it would have been some comfort. If he did speak, then they tell his speeches to every one, and say, O my sweet child, or friend, I shall never forget thy words. Would you have me

put out of my mind his dying speeches? And so those sayings are a perpetual nourishment and food to their grief. If he die on a sudden, then they lament, because he was snatched, rather than went away. If he die of a lingering sickness, then they say he was nothing but skin and bone, a mere anatomy; never any creature endured so much as he did. And so they complain they know not for what, for they would not have had him gone away so soon, but spun out his life, till he look more ruefully. And indeed men never want some pretences for these complaints; but the true reason is, that they would not have had their friends to die at all. In what glass soever this potion had been presented, they would have swallowed it with the same disgust. And I must confess it is very bitter, yet we should not study to make it worse than it is; but by digesting such considerations as these, receive it with a better countenance, and take it down more easily. For which end let us proceed further and weigh what follows.

SECTION V.

WHICH CONTAINS COMFORTS AGAINST THE LOSS
OF CHILDREN, PARENTS, CONSORTS, FRIENDS,
UPON A DUE CONSIDERATION WHAT EVERY
ONE OF THEM IS.

Let us consider well who it is for whom we make our lamentations. Who is it, I say, that death hath taken away from us? Perhaps it is an infant, a poor little weakling, newly crept into the light. And this hath the least of wonder in it of all other things, that such a little spark of life should be blown out. A greater wonder it is that it was not strangled in the gate of the womb. A little while ago it had no life, and it is now but as it then was. We were once content without it; why cannot we be content without it now? It never loved us, nor was capable to shew any affection to us, and therefore we may the better part

with it. It was scarce tied to our heart, and therefore it need not make the strings crack. It was not unwilling to go out of the world; and if it had lived longer, death would have been more against its will. It hath lost no great matter, for it knew not the benefits of life. It hath cost us nothing, or we have been but at a small charge about it, and therefore our loss is not so great neither, as we make it. If it could have known the miseries of living, and it had been put to its choice, very likely it would not have chosen to live, but to be what now it is. It hath not blotted its soul by any sin, nor deflowered the virgin purity wherein it was born. If it have any thing to complain of, it is only this, that it was born. And therefore let us be content, for it is better perhaps for it, and not much the worse for us. If we weep so much for an infant, what shall we do for a man? Either let us now let down the sluice, or else expect that we shall then be drowned. If he had lived to be a man, it might have done as we do, miserably

bewail the death of its children. And therefore either let us not thus bewail it; or else think it happy, that it lived not to be so miserable as we think ourselves: and both ways our grief will be cured.

But suppose it be a child of a larger growth, whose death extorts these tears from us. Yet it is but one, and we may have many more remaining. Shall we lose all the content of a great many, because we suffer the want of one? If the life of this one would have pleased us so much, then how joyful should we be in the life of four or five? If it be such a grief to lose a child, then let us be thankful that we lie not under the miserable grief of losing them all. But if we cannot take this patiently, then I doubt we shall run mad with impatience, if God should take them all away. We must learn to part with more, by parting willingly with this one; for all must die too. Can he bear a stone weight, who cannot endure the load of one pound? And yet how justly may we fear

that all the rest should shortly follow, seeing we fret so much at God's hand in this? Suppose that this was the most goodly child, yet not fairer sure than all the rest put together. Or if he was most beautiful, yet some of the others may be more wise. If this had all our love, then we may learn now how to divide our love equally, and take pleasure in loving more. If he loved us most, then he would have wished us, if he had thought of it, not to make ourselves miserable by mourning for him. So Charidemus said to his friends when he was a dying; "It is God's will that I should die, and there can nothing that is hurtful come from him; I am very willing to die, and I beseech you believe me in what I say, for I have a greater care to speak truth now, than any of you can have. Grieve not for me, for I grieve not; do not make yourselves miserable, for I think not myself to be so. *Καὶ καθόσον οἰοί τε ἔστε μὴ συγχωρεῖτε τῇ ἀλγηδόνι*, As much as ever you are able, refrain from all sadness, for no sad

thing hath befallen me.”^m Thus we should say to our friends, if we love them; and therefore their love to us should not make us sad, because they would have all they love to be cheerful. If they could tell us their mind, they would certainly bid us cease our mourning; and therefore let us end it of our own accord. Let there be such an harmony still between us in our wills and desires, that we may not be wailing and lamenting, when they are wishing we may be comforted.

But let it be supposed that it is an only child; yet are there not many hopes that you may have more? Who gave you this? Cannot he give you another? Hath not he that hath the keys of the grave, the keys of the womb also? If one die, then as long as the world lasts, another shall be born. And if we desire children for the good of the world, then so they be born, it is no matter by whom. But if for our sake, then we may have them as well as others; though perpetual

^m Dion Chryst. Orat. xxx.


grief and sadness, you may be sure, is not the way to procure them. Or if God will give us none, then we may adopt one. Any child will love us, as if it was our own, if it know not that it is any body's else. Nay, any one will love and serve us for what we have, and instead of one, we shall have many that will thank us (more than he perhaps) to be our heirs: but if we have nothing, then why should we desire children for to leave them miserable? But as I said, why should we not hope for more, and those better than him we lost? With this hope David comforted Bathsheba his wife, (2 Samuel xii. 24) who bare a Jedidiah, a man beloved of the Lord. If we count it such a strange thing to die, then it should seem it is an ordinary thing to live, and so why should we not expect the new life of another? But if it be no strange thing to die, then, as I have said already, we may well be comforted. Or if we should have no more, yet this may be some comfort, that then we shall have no more to mourn thus

sadly for. Yea, suppose thou art the last of thy family and name, (as was the great Scaliger, and Lipsius, also another excellent scholar) it is no great matter, seeing the world is not to last long. If thy name must have an end, what needest thou to trouble thyself when it ends? And if men can think it no harm to suffer their name to die of itself, (as Scaliger did who would not marry) why shouldest thou be troubled if thine perish, after due care to preserve and uphold it?

But then if thou hadst never so many children, yet who knows how they may prove? If they should be bad, then thou thyself wilt say, that it had been better they had never been. They that thou mournest for, because they are dead, might have given thee greater cause of mourning if they had lived. If the death of a child be sad, his wickedness would have been far sadder; for that is a worse death. He that dies doth trouble his parents but once; but he that is bad, is a perpetual torment to them. He that is dead, cannot

indeed help his parents, but then he doth not hurt them, as many a bad one doth. For those that are dead we only grieve, we do not fear; but for those that are bad we fear perpetually, and we grieve also; yea, all the sorrow we now conceive at their death, will not equal perhaps the mere fear which we should have had from their infancy, lest their life should prove bad.

It is said in the life of John, the patriarch of Alexandria, that a merchant came to him to pray for a son of his that was at sea, that he might be safe. Within a month the child died, and his ship likewise was cast away. And when he was much troubled at this double loss, he thought one night that he saw the patriarch standing by his bed, and saying to him, "Thou desiredst me to pray that thy son might be safe, and behold now he is safe, for he is dead. If he had lived wickedly in his future course, then he could not have been safe." And besides their badness, suppose our children should have died of some in-



famous and base death, this would have troubled us more than death itself. Yea, some there have been that have sought their parents' death, and what a trouble would this have been! Some have slain their fathers, and others their mothers, and who was there left to mourn then? If you be affrighted at these strange supposals, which sometimes have had a real truth, yet consider once more, that if they had not been bad, notwithstanding who knows what miseries they might have endured, worse than death? Can you tell what misfortunes might have befallen them, which might have made them wish they had died sooner? They are now dead, perhaps they have that which afterward they might have desired, and not so easily obtained. For how many and frequent occasions are there of sorrow here! To find a life without crosses, we must seek among them that last but from morn to night. And so great are the troubles and anguish which some endure, that their life is nothing else but a long continued death.

Which made one of the Gymnosophists answer Alexander, when he asked whether death or life was stronger, "Life sure, for that bears the most evils." And suppose he that is dead should not have been miserable; yet now he is gone, if he might rise again, it is likely he would not, lest he should know again the fear and the pains of dying.

He is freed from the vanity and vexation of life, and from the terrors and agonies of death. He hath left the evils of this world, as well as the goods; and is out of a capacity of suffering, as well as enjoying any thing here. This is one of the comforts, I remember, which that great divine Gregorius Nazianz. gives his parents against the loss of his dear brother Cæsarius. "We are sad to think," saith he, "that Cæsarius shall rule and govern no more; but let us consider withal that none shall hereafter domineer or tyrannize over him. None shall fear or stand in awe of him more; but he shall not fear neither the insolencies of a grievous master, who is not worthy, perhaps,

to be a servant. He shall heap up no more riches; no, nor shall he be envied by others, or tormented by his own desires of increasing wealth. Hippocrates, Galen, and all the rest he shall expound no more; but he shall not labour under diseases neither; no, nor bear the burden of other men's miseries. He shall demonstrate Euclid, Ptolomy, and Hero no more; but he shall not be vexed neither with the proud ignorance of empty people. Plato, and Aristotle, and Pyrrho, and all their fellows, can do him no more credit; nor shall he cast in his mind how to dissolve their little subtilties. What shall I remember more? Those high prized things, which are so greedily sought by all, wife and children, he shall have none; nor shall he mourn for them, or be lamented by them; either by leaving them to others, or being left himself a monument of calamity."ⁿ

"All this is true," may some say; "my child is free from all the dangers and miseries

ⁿ Orat. x. p. 172, edit. Paris.

of this life, but if you knew what a rare creature it was that I have lost, you would allow my continued complaints. The heir of an illustrious house, the prop of his family, the hope of his country, the child of a thousand prayers, and that in the spring and flower of his age. What heart of adamant would not sympathize with one in this condition?" I will answer you in the words of a great friend of the father now mentioned, who is ready to comply with your sorrows, if you will be but as forward to receive his consolations. "I confess," saith St. Basil, in a letter of his to Nectarius on this subject, "that it is impossible to be insensible of your loss. There was nobody but wished, when he was alive, that they had such a son; and when he was dead, they wept for him as if he had been their own. Nay, if we would complain and abandon ourselves to weeping for this accident, the whole time of our life is not long enough for it. If all mankind would groan with us, they could not make a lamentation equal to this loss; no, though

they should make a river with their tears. The son himself, if he were sensible, would shrink at such a spectacle. But if we will let the gift of God, which he hath put into our hearts interpose, that sober reason which sets a measure to our souls in prosperity, it will suggest many things which we have seen and heard to moderate us in these sad circumstances. It will tell us that this life is full of affliction; and that all places abound with examples of human calamities. But, above all, that it is the command of God not to lament the dead in the faith of Christ, because of the hope of the resurrection; and that there are great crowns laid up for great patience. If we suffer reason to sing these things in our ears, we may find some moderate end of this evil. And therefore, I exhort thee as a generous combatant to fortify thyself against the heaviness of this stroke, and not lie down under the weight of sorrow. Being persuaded, that though the reason of God's dispensations are out of our reach, yet we ought entirely to ac-

cept that which is ordered by one so wise and loving; although it be heavy and grievous to be borne. For he knows how to appoint to every one what is profitable, and why he hath set unequal terms to our life. The cause is incomprehensible by us, why some are carried away sooner, and others tarry longer in this toilsome and miserable life: so that we ought in all things to adore his loving-kindness, and not to take any thing ill at his hands. Remembering the great and famous voice of Job, who when he heard that his ten children were all struck dead in one moment, said, 'The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so it is come to pass.' Let us make this admirable language our own. They are rewarded with an equal recompence by the just judge, who perform the same worthy actions. We are not robbed of a child, but only have restored him to the lender; nor is his life extinct, but only translated to a better. The earth doth not cover our beloved, but heaven hath received him:

let us tarry awhile, and we shall be in his company. The distance of time is but short between the arrival of several travellers to their inn; into which some are already turned, others are entering, and the rest are making great haste toward it: but they shall all come to one end. For though some perform the journey sooner, yet all are in the same road, and the same lodging expects them all.”^o

Thus that holy man comforted Nectarius; and when he had done, he wrote the like consolatory letter to his wife; which is so full of good counsels, that I shall transcribe some of it. “Those things,” saith he, “which befel us are not without Providence, as the gospel teaches us. For there is not a sparrow that falls to the ground without the will of our Father. Why should we go about to resist his will; seeing by all our strife we cannot repair what is already done, but we may lose and ruin ourselves. Let us not condemn the just sentence of God: We are not wise enough

^o Epist. clxxxviii.

to discern his secret judgments. Our Lord makes a trial of thee, how much thou lovest him. Now is the time by patience to take thy portion with the martyrs. The mother of the Maccabees saw seven of her children put to death, with miserable torments : and neither sighed, nor shed ignoble tears : but she gave God thanks, that she had anything to offer to him. It is a great affliction, I confess, but there is a great reward for the patience. When thou wast made a mother, and broughtest forth a son, thou gavest God thanks ; but didst thou not think then that, being mortal thyself, thou broughtest forth a mortal child ? What is there strange then in this, that he who was mortal is now dead ? He died, perhaps thou wilt say, before his time. How knowest thou that ? He died in a very good time, for any thing thou canst tell ; for it is beyond the compass of our understanding to choose that which is most profitable for souls, and set the bounds of human life." P

Much more he adds to the same effect, which he repeats also in other letters on the like occasion.^a But after this which was last said, what need is there of any more? The most solid comforts are those which are derived from this humble submission to Almighty God, and entire resignation of ourselves to his incomprehensible wisdom. Concerning which a modern writer hath spoken such excellent words, that I cannot forbear to translate them hither. “Our lives,” saith he, “are not all alike; their length is measured by the will of him that giveth them. He gathereth the fruit while it is green; he stays till it be ripe; and he lets it hang till it be rotten: whatsoever he doth, we owe this submission to our Creator, to believe he doeth nothing unjustly. He doeth no wrong, neither to them he takes away young, nor to them whom he suffers to grow old. But to ask why he doeth things with such diversity, is to question that which we shall not be resolved of,

^a To Elpidius, Epist. cccxlviii. and also cci.

till we come to a place where there is a greater light : now we are in such a darkness as renders all our curiosities unprofitable. There are plummets to sound the deep abysses of the sea, but none for God's secrets. Believe me, and put this trouble out of your mind ; it cannot stay there without diminution to your honour ; and which is more, (I must add) without disrespect to God." ^r We wonder perhaps, (to use the words of one of our own nation, ^s which is no less fruitful of good discourses than any other) "to see a man, who in a wood were left at his liberty to fell what trees he would, take only the crooked, and leave the straightest : but yet that man hath, perhaps, a ship to build, and not an house, and so hath use of that kind of timber. Let not us, who know that in our Father's house are many mansions, but yet have no model or design of that building, wonder at his taking in his materials ; why he takes the young and

^r Mons. Malherbe.

^s Dr Donne, Letter to a Lady in mourning.

leaves the old, or why the sickly over-live them who had better health. Then is the 'will of God done in earth as it is in heaven,' when we neither pretermitt his actions, nor resist them, nor yet pass them over in an inconsideration, as though God had no hand therein; nor go about to take them out of his hands, as though we could direct him to do them better."

I shall conclude this, with some considerations of the same writer, in a letter to a friend of his that had lost her son. "We do but borrow children of God, to lend them to the world. And when I lend the world a daughter in marriage, or a son in any profession, the world doth not always pay me well again: my hopes are not always answered in that daughter, or that son. Of all that I lend to, the grave is my best pay-master. That shall restore me my child, where he and I shall have but one Father; and pay me my earth, when that earth shall be amber, a sweet perfume, in the nostrils of his and my Saviour.

Since I am well content to send one son to the church, the other to the wars; why should I be loath to send one part of either son to heaven, and the other to the earth? Comfort yourself in this, my noble sister; but above all in this, that it is the declared will of God. In sicknesses and other worldly crosses, there are anxieties and perplexities; we wish one thing to-day, in the behalf of a distressed child or friend, and another to-morrow; because God hath not yet declared his will. But when he hath done that by death, there is no room for any anxiety, for any perplexity, no, not for a wish; for we may not so much as pray for the dead. You know David made his child's sickness his Lent, but his death his Easter. He fasted till it was dead, but then he returned to his repast, because then he had a declaration of God's will. I am far from quenching in you, or discharging natural affections: but I know your easy apprehensions, and over-tenderness in this kind. And therefore since, in so numerous a family as yours,

every year is like to present you with some such occasion of sorrow, I advise you in the office of a friend, and a brother, and priest of God, not only to take this patiently, as a declaration of God's present will; but catechistically, as an instruction for the future: and that God in this tells you, he will do so again, in some other of your friends. For, to take any one cross patiently, is but to forgive God for once; but, to surrender one's self entirely to God, is to be ready for all that he shall be pleased to do."

These general antidotes being timely used, will preserve us from fainting under any other evil of this nature; and I need not be solicitous to prescribe more particular remedies against them. But if any expect I should, and tell me it is the death of their parents which they bewail; they that brought them into the world, are themselves gone out of it; I desire to know of them, what wonder there is in this. If our parents had not been to go out, what need would there have been of bringing us

in? If they were designed to stay always, then there had been no room for us. They might more easily remember their mortality than we; for there is no act that puts us more in mind of death, than that whereby we give another life. And it is but one of them, it is likely, that we have lost; we may then love the other the more. Or if both, yet we have least reason to complain about their death of all others; for both nature, and they themselves, and we also, would have them die before us. We complain that people die when they are young, and will we complain too when they die of old age? Then it seems we will have none die, and cannot be contented unless they live always. Would they have been willing to have been left childless without you? If not, then they have their choice to go first. Or are you so well in love with death, that it would have been more acceptable to you to have gone before? or so much in love with them, that on that account you had rather have died than they? Then know

that your death would as much more have troubled them, than theirs doth you; as the love of parents to their children transcends the love of all children unto them. It is very well then as it is. It is not handsome neither to complain when we are forty or fifty years of age, that our parents are dead, for they could live no longer, or if they could, it would have been but a kind of death. If we will not cease to complain when we are of age, neither shall we ever cease when we grow older. For as Cardan tells us, a poor woman once came to his door to beg an alms, and though she were seventy years of age, yet she used this argument in her complaints, that she was a poor fatherless and motherless creature, and had none to take any care of her. We need the less of their care, when we can take care of ourselves.

But perhaps they die before we are of age, and can take care of ourselves. Then we are least sensible of their loss; or if we are so considerate as to know that, we may consider

also such things as these: there is none fatherless that hath God for his father; and he that hath not, would be little better for his earthly parents. If they were good, let us follow their example, and remember their counsel: if they were bad, they would not have been true parents to us; and it is well perhaps that we had not such an example to follow. They may live still in us, if they were good; if they were bad, we had need live the better, and spend those tears for their sins (which may entail curses on us) which we bestow upon them. But besides, it is observed by some, that the most eminent persons that have been in the world did lose their parents when they were young, or else it is like they had not proved so eminent. The great Cæsar, and his successor Augustus; Alexander, the monarch of the world; Cicero, the famous orator; Galen, the most excellent physician; Aristotle, the great philosopher; are all examples of this truth. If these had enjoyed the support of their parents to lean


upon, they might not have tried their own sufficiency, nor exercised their abilities; or else they might have been wholly eclipsed by their lustre, and done nothing to be taken notice of in the world.

But my loss, will some sorrowful creature say, is greater than all this; no less than half myself is gone from me. Death hath ravished a husband out of my bosom, and he the tenderest in the world. A sad case, I must confess; but it is well, since death is so common, that he hath left one half, and not taken all.

Would he had, will that passionate soul reply: I cannot live in any joy, now that the better part of me is dead and gone. O that I had never lived to see this day; or not out-lived it! Who can think of so wide a breach, and not be ready to go out at it? But stay a little, I beseech you; did you never think of this before now? Did you not take one another with this clause, "Till death us do part?" Death and you ought to have been

better acquainted before this time. It sought your acquaintance long ago, and would have been as familiar with you as your husband. Who spoke of parting with you, when you first came together: and now that you are parted, hath set you free again as you were before? If you like that state so well, you are at liberty to seek another self. If you do not like to be tied in such a yoke, why do you mourn thus, for the gaining of your freedom? Or if you liked that person so well, as not to be able to think of any other, then you may have the glory to stand among the rare and noble examples of conjugal love and friendship; who have preserved the image of their deceased husband or wife so lively engraven in their hearts, that nothing could ever displace it, or blot it out.

Alas! may some of the tenderer sex say, whose hearts are commonly most deeply wounded with this affliction, what a pitiful glory is this; and what a torment will it prove to me, to have only the image of such a




person ever in my sight? It is not possible to keep myself from being in pain and anguish, when I feel that he is torn from me. Since God hath made man and wife not to be two, but one flesh, how can I take this separation otherwise, than as if my body was cut in sunder? In such language, I remember, St. Basil represents the complaints of a desolate widow. And if you please, hear his answer, in a letter to the wife of Arinthæus.^t Some part or other of which may help, perhaps, to compose the spirits of such persons, whom I cannot but pity above all other; and make them conceive some joy, when they look upon the image of what they have lost. And if you meet with some things in it that have been said already, do not therefore skip it over hastily: for second thoughts of a good thing are better than the first; and the same thing in a new dress may meet with those affections, which it did not excite before.

“There is none,” saith he, “that doth not

^t Epist. cxxxxvi.

sigh for such a man. Who can be so stony-hearted as not to shed a tear for him? Yet let us not complain that we are deprived of him, but give thanks to God who joined you together, that you have lived so long with him. To be bereaved of a husband, is common to you with all other women: but to dwell with such an one, it may be questioned whether any can glory in the like happiness. For to say the truth, God, who made us all, created this man as an example of human nature: so that all eyes were turned towards him, all tongues praised him; and many could not believe Arinthæus to be dead, when they heard the sad tidings of it. But he hath suffered only that, which shall one day befall the heavens, the earth, and the sun itself. He died also in his full splendour; and by his happiness in this world, did not forfeit that of the next. Translate therefore thy mind from things present, to the care of those that are to come; so that thou mayest be worthy by good works to enter into the same place of rest and



repose. Spare thy aged mother; spare thy young daughter; who have no other comforter left but thyself. Be an example of courage to the rest of womankind: and so moderate thy passions, that thine heart may not fail thee, nor thou mayest not be swallowed up of grief. And, above all things, look to the great reward of patience, which is promised by our Lord Jesus Christ; in recompense of what we do here.”—“Do not think,” as he adds in another epistle to her,^u “that any affliction idly befalls the servants of God, who are under his special care, but for a proof of their sincere love to our Creator. For as great labours bring the *athletæ* to their crowns, so are Christians by these trials brought to perfection, if they receive with a becoming patience and all thanksgiving, whatsoever is ordered by our Lord. And there is nothing, I assure you, but is administered by the goodness of our Master; and therefore ought not to be received as grievous, though for the

^u Epist. ccli.

present it hurt our weakness. For though we know not the reasons by which every thing is done, as good, by our Master; yet this we ought to persuade ourselves, that what hath happened was profitable, either for us, because of the reward of patience; or for the soul departed, that it might not be farther engaged in a world so full of wickedness."

These were the arguments whereby he comforted other persons as well as her; as appears by his letter to the wife of Brison,^v to whom he adds these words: "Let thy children be as so many lively pictures of him to comfort thee in his absence. Let thy thoughtfulness and care about their education, draw aside thy mind from these sad reflections. And by a constant solicitude to please God the rest of thy life, thou wilt get an excellent ease and quiet to thy afflicted thoughts. For a preparation for our defence before Jesus Christ, and a study to be found among those that love him, will be sufficient to obliterate

^v Epist. cccxlvii.

all our sorrow, so that we shall not be swallowed up in it."

The same he writes to one that had lost an excellent wife;^x a person so fit for him, that they might see themselves in each other, as in a glass. "But why should we contend with such a law of God as is past so many ages ago. We are not the first, nor the only persons, that suffer on this fashion. It is a common thing for all to die, though to have a good wife is peculiar to few, whom God blesses. The truth is, to grieve for a separation from a wife, is one of the gifts of God: for I have known many that have parted with them, just as if they had thrown off a burden."

The rest I shall not recite, because I would leave some room for a long discourse of another great person,^y addressed to disconsolate widows; the sense whereof is this: I have lost (saith some sad soul) not only my companion, but my guide, my stay; my shield,

^x Epist. cccxlv.

^y St. Chrysostom upon 1 Thess. Hom. vi.

my second self. I doubt not of the resurrection, which St. Paul treats of; but what shall I do in the mean time? Much business I have to manage, but I am become only a fit prey for every cormorant, who hath a mind to be unjust. The servants who before revered me, will now despise a silly woman. If my husband ever obliged any body, alas! it will be soon forgot, now that he can do them no further kindness. But if he did them any wrong, they will be sure to take a severe revenge on me, who am not able to resist them. This is the thing that breeds me all my anguish; set this aside, and his death would not give me such a torment. What shall we answer (saith St. Chrysostom) unto this? "Truly I could easily demonstrate, that not what they pretend, but an unreasonable passion, is the cause of words so sad and doleful. If this were the cause of their lamentation, then they must never cease thus to bewail themselves. But if after a year's time all these tears are dried up, it is certain

the want of their defence and comfort (which will then be most felt) is not the only cause of them. But let it be supposed that this is the fountain of all their sorrow; yet consider how much infidelity there is in it, that we should think it was they who took the care and patronage of us, not God. It cannot choose but provoke his displeasure, to see a creature of his more beloved than himself; and therefore, perhaps, he took away thy husband, because he was more to thee than thy God. The Holy One of Israel is very jealous, and cannot endure to be so slighted, that other things should have so much of our affections, as his excellent goodness; which is therefore to be beloved by us above all things, because it expresses a love to us above all other creatures. What was the reason, I beseech you, that widowhood and orphanage were so rare in the old times among good people? Why did Abraham, and Sarah, and Isaac, live till a great old age? Truly, I think it was because Abraham loved God more than either

of them. And when God did but say to him, Kill thy son; he went about it as readily as if he had been to sacrifice a lamb. But we are heavy and dull; we are carried so headlong into the embraces of creatures, that God is fain even against our wills to draw our affections to himself, by drawing them away from us. Do but love God more than thy husband, and I will undertake that either thou shalt not fall into widowhood, or shalt not feel it so great a mischief when thou fallest into it. And I have a good ground for what I avouch; for thou hast him for thy husband and thy defence, that never dies; and that loves thee infinitely more than any man can do. And if this reason be not sufficient to convince thee, I have a comparison that will do the business. Tell me, if thou hadst a husband who loved thee so much, as if he had no soul but thine; one that was as much beloved of others as he loved thee; one so wise and discreet, that he was as much admired as loved; one so gentle and compliant, as if he was but wax to thy

impressions; one that made thee shine as the moon doth with the rays of the sun: and suppose thou hadst a child by this dear person, who dies before he comes of age; wouldest thou be miserably tormented and overwhelmed with sorrow and grief for the death of this child, while thou didst enjoy such a better love? No, in no wise. He that is so fair and beautiful in thine eyes, would supply the want of it, as the sun doth the absence of the stars. He that is more loved and esteemed, would quite obscure and hide all the other's excellencies. Do but love God then more than this husband, and his glory, which puts out the lustre of all other things, will make thee as little troubled at his death, as in the other case thou wouldest be for thy child's. Nay far less, one would in reason think; inasmuch as God is infinitely more above that husband, than he above the child.

“ Besides, what is it which thou receivest from thy husband, that is comparable to what the love of God gives thee? Are they not

pangs and labours, and, as the world goes, unkind words perhaps, and angry chidings? Or, if thou canst tell me of better things, what are they? What are fine clothes, and jewels, and honours, and such like things, to the Son of God; to the brotherhood and adoption; to the kingdom and eternal glory; to the life of God and coheirship with the only begotten? Wilt thou, after all this, tell me thou canst not but be passionately troubled for thy husband's loss? Methinks thou shouldest consider, that if thou wantest him, thou hast God. If thou wantest thy menial servants and attendants, thou hast the guard of spiritual powers; the dominions and principalities of heaven are thy ministers. If thou sayest thy children want a father, that cannot be, seeing God is the Father to the fatherless. If thou fearest they shall want necessities, tell thyself who gave them to thee, and whether the life be not more than meat, and the body than raiment. Or, if thou fearest they shall not be so well provided for, as otherwise they might have

been; how many could I tell thee of, that have been bred by widows, and proved famous? And, on the other side, how many that have had fathers and been good for nothing? Put the fear of God in their hearts, and this will preserve them more than a father. When the guard is set within, they will less need one without. This will be better than riches, and glory and promotion to them; this will make them famous both upon earth and in heaven.

“Do not set thine eyes then on the youth, who by reason of his father’s greatness is girded with a golden belt, and rides on a prancing horse, and is taken into king’s courts, and hath many tutors and governors following him at the heels. But cast thine eye above, open the gate of heaven by thy thoughts, look into that stately palace, behold the King of Glory there sitting on his throne; and if he whom thou admirest on earth can be sooner admitted thither than thy child, fetch a great sigh; fill the heavens with noise and clamour; I do not forbid thy lamentations. But seeing

neither riches, nor birth, nor anything else is there preferred, but only virtue and goodness, judge what reason thou hast to be content; and think how certain it is that nothing can make us dismally sad, *ἀν θέλωμεν φιλοσοφεῖν*, if we will not be fools, but philosophers.

And for thyself, if thou complainest of being desolate and solitary, remember what the apostle saith, (1 Timothy v. 5) that such an one 'trusteth in God.' This is only an opportunity to enjoy more of the chiefest good. Thou hast more time and liberty to please God, now that thou hast none else to please. Thou art freed from all other bonds, to be tied faster to him. There are no chains, no restraints upon thee, to keep thee from doing what thou wouldest. Thou art separated from one husband, to be united to a better. Thou hast not the fellow-servant, but thou hast the Master. Thou hast not thy husband to talk with thee, but God is thy husband. When thou prayest, dost not thou talk with God? When thou readest, doth not God talk with


thee? And what doth he say to thee? Words more desirable, more sweet, than can drop from any husband's lips. If he speak never so kindly, the matter is not great; for he is but a fellow-servant. When the Lord himself will be pleased to embrace and speak lovingly to his handmaid, τότε πολλή ἡ θεραπεία, this is a strange piece of service. And observe, I beseech you, how he serves and waits upon us: hear in what words he bespeaks our affections. 'Come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy laden, and you shall find rest to your souls.' And again, by the prophet he cries, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet I will not forget thee.' What charms are there in these words! And what can have more of honey in them, than those expressions in the Song of Songs, 'My love, my dove, my fair one, my paradise,' &c. And yet this is the language of God to men. If we will not rest satisfied in so tender a kindness, there is no remedy, but we must be miserable."

To this purpose writes that excellent person, with an elegance which, though I could not imitate, yet I could not but follow ; till I have run beyond the bounds within which I intended to confine this discourse. And yet the minds of such persons as I am now treating withal, is many times so clouded by their sorrow, that it will be charity to try all other means to brighten and clear them. I shall recommend therefore to them, before I take leave of this argument, the advice of a great man in a neighbouring country, not many years ago,* sent to a lady oppressed with an obstinate grief for the loss of a dear husband. His words are to this sense. “Come to yourself again, Madam, and think what you are doing. You drive away and estrange from you that very thing which you love above all the world, and may enjoy continually, if you please. For where, I pray you, do you think that is which you so much cherished and loved ? You will answer me, in heaven.

* M. du Vair

And so it is, I make no question, full of joy and content among the blessed. But withal you believe that things above are so separated from us, that they can be no more rejoined to us, as long as we live. Oh, how much are you deceived! God himself, who is the highest and furthest from our natures, is continually in us to give us unspeakable joy from his presence, if our souls be fit to harbour and entertain him. The holy angels are continually about us, if we take care to draw them to us. And how do we know, that blessed souls in whom the faith of a holy love could never die, would not come to visit us, if we made ourselves fit to receive them, and they found nothing in us contrary to their nature and happiness, which hindered us from going towards them? And what greater obstacle can there be unto it, than tears and sorrow? The wings that must carry us up thither, are our thoughts, which animated by our desires and the ardours of an holy friendship, must never cease beating till they raise us up to

that which we look for. And what do our tears but wet the wings of our thoughts, and hinder the flight of them? Do you not see that among the vapours which arise from the earth, those which proceed from rivers and marshes and other moist places, stop in the middle region of the air, and melting there, return from whence they came? Whereas those which come from drier matters, soar up higher, till being inflamed they turn into comets and other celestial fires. Do you believe in like manner, that your thoughts, though never so pious, can never mount high if they be clogged and wet with abundant tears. Let them be heated by the sacred flame of your holy friendship, and purified from worldly contagion; and taking their flight through a calm and undisturbed spirit, as through a clear and bright air, you will questionless overtake that which is fled from you, and embrace that blessed soul, and grasp the splendour of that eternal light where-with it is clothed. And you will find it as if it consented to your desires, coming down



again all along your thoughts as by a thread, giving you a more perfect rejoicing therein than can be imagined. It will dwell in you, (at least by the lively image of your vehement thoughts) and seem as if it were yourself. For we find that in corporeal things a violent imagination makes us believe we see and touch that which is farthest from us. Try, Madam, that which I say, and you will find it most true. Make use of this troublesome grief, which you cannot be rid of, to spur your desires, to be rejoined to that, at the loss of which you so much repine." Thus he.

To which methinks I hear some reply, that this way is too sublime for their spirits. They cannot mount themselves on this fashion, but cleave fast to these terrestrial objects. It may be so; and all that I can say to such, is this, that next to God and our blessed Saviour, whom they apprehend, I hope, every where, to take care of those that commit themselves to the Fatherly Providence of the most Supreme Reason; they should entertain them-

selves in the company and embraces of their remaining friends, whose presence is most delightful, and converse most comfortable. And all of them put together, may make a sensible image of a dead husband.

I know they will say, but these friends may die too, and then what shall I do? I have told you already, and therefore have the less to add on this subject. Yet I shall remember you of the words of Seneca,^a concerning the death of a friend, which are to this purpose: If thou hast other friends besides this, is it not a greater reproach to them of their unworthiness, that all of them are not able to comfort thee for the loss of one? If thou hast no more, then thou hast done thyself a greater wrong than God hath done thee; for he hath taken but one, and thou hast made never an one. "God makes men, (as is said by some) and we make friends." And if thou beest desirous of more, and findest such need of them, thou hast leisure now to go and seek them.

He can never want friends that wants not virtue. He loved not one well, that cannot love any more than one. Is it not a ridiculous folly for a man to shrug and cry when he hath lost his coat, rather than go to fetch another garment to cover him from the cold? If he be taken away whom thou didst love, seek another whom to love. It is far better to repair thy loss, than to mourn for it. And if thou canst not find another to thy mind, how couldest thou be a friend to him that is dead, if thou hast no power to help thyself? Why should not a good man find enough in God and himself? The want of nothing can make thee want virtue; and he that hath that, hath enough. Nay, every good man is thy friend if thou beest good; and they that never saw thy face before, if they see thy goodness, will be good unto thee. *Bonos omnes oportet inter se amicos, esse, etsi sint minus noti.*^b All good men ought to be friends, though they be not much acquainted.

^b Apuleius de Philos. Mor.

I have passed over this last particular (as you see) very swiftly, because I observe my discourse swells to a greater bigness than I intended. And in some of the following considerations you shall find satisfaction to every one of these cases, if you will but concoct them.




SECTION VI.

WHICH DIRECTS HOW TO QUIET OURSELVES BY
COMPARING OURSELVES BOTH WITH OUR-
SELVES AND WITH OTHERS ; AND THERE ARE
FIVE WAYS OF COMPARISON INSISTED ON.

Consider so far as to make comparisons.
And first of all compare thyself now with what thou once wast, yea, with what thou once wast not. There was a time when thou thyself wast not so much as dead, for thou wast not at all, nor hadst any capacity of joy or sorrow. Hath God dealt unkindly with thee in giving thee a being capable of both ? Wouldest thou have refused a being, (if we may suppose an offer to be made to nothing) unless he would have given thee nothing but joy, and never taken away what he gave thee ? Unless thou hast a mind to be nothing, be contented with what


thou art. Then thou hadst not these relations, for thou hadst not thyself. Why shouldest thou mourn now that thou hast them not, since thou hast thyself? Is there not more reason to be thankful for a being, though capable of mourning, than to be troubled at the occasion of it? Surely thou dost not desire to cease thy mourning, by ceasing to be. Ease thyself, then, of thy grief by the being that God hath given thee. If thou couldest not mourn then, do not mourn now. But then consider, that since thou hadst a being, there was a time when thou hadst none of these relations, no wife, nor children, nor friends which thou art deprived of. Yet thou didst not then weep and lament, and trouble thyself as now thou dost. Seeing thou art what thou wast, be contented as thou wast. What difference is there between that time and this? Thou wast as much without them then, as now thou art; why shouldest thou not be as much contented now as then? All the difference between those that want a thing, and those that



lose it, is only this, that they who lose it once had that, which they that want it never had. Now shall we be the more troubled because we once had it? One would think that their trouble should be the greatest that neither have it, nor ever had it. We have reason to be more pleased that we had it, if there were any good in it; and if there was none, then we have no reason to be displeased that we have it not. Say, hadst thou rather never have enjoyed thy friends, than now be deprived of them? Was thy condition worse or better heretofore? If it was but equal to thy present, then thou hadst reason to be equally pleased. Remember how thou wast then, and be so now. If it was worse then, why shouldst thou be now worse troubled? If it was better then, why didst thou change it, seeing thou knewest that all must die? No question it is better to have enjoyed a good thing, than never to have known it. And therefore seeing thou art no worse now than thou wast once, but hast been better than once thou wast, be not

more troubled than thou wast once, yea, be less troubled.

But, secondly, compare thy present condition with what thou mayest be. This is not the worst that may befall thee in such a world of miseries. Suppose, then, that thou shouldest lose all thy children, as Job did, and then lose thy whole estate ; that the sea should swallow one part, and fire burn another, and thieves rob thee of a third, and bad debtors quite undo thee. Suppose, after all this, that a fire should begin to burn in thy own bones, and that should break into boils, and they should break into scabs, and thou shouldest be poor, even to a proverb, as that holy man was. Must thou not be contented then ? But how is that possible, seeing thou canst not be contented now ? If such a shower of tears fall from thine eyes for this little loss, then sure thou wilt make a flood or a deluge. But what wilt thou do at last, after all thy lamentations ? Wilt thou kill thyself ? Then it seems thou takest death to be the end of all troubles ; and I



wonder thou shouldest be so troubled at that which hath eased thy friend of them. Or what else wilt thou do? comfort thyself? Try how thou canst do that now, for if thy stomach refuse cordials in this distemper, never expect that it will digest them, when thou wilt be far more sick and apt to vomit them up again. If Job had cursed the day wherein he was born at the first breach that God made upon his estate, what expressions of grief (below a great sin) had he left for himself when he sate upon the dunghill? The good man took the first losses so patiently, that all the rest which befel him could not move him to greater impatience. Do thou remember him, and say to thy soul, Come, be quiet, this is not the worst that may betide us; we have no such cause to cry as we may have. Let us learn patience against a time when we may have more need of it.

And then if we should be brought to the very dust, and fall as low as the dung of the earth, yet there is another way of considering

what may be besides this. We may be as happy again, as now we account ourselves miserable. Our sorrow may be turned into joy, as our joy hath been turned into sorrow. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy may come in the morning," according as I have said in the former discourse. And so it was with Job, whom God blessed in his latter end more than in his beginning.^c "We have seen the end of the Lord," saith the apostle James, "that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."^d But then this pity of his is to be obtained only by patience. If we cannot be contented, it is needful, we may think, that he should teach us it still by greater losses.

Thirdly, Compare what thou hast lost, with what thou hast not lost. God leaves commonly more than he takes. He takes away thy children, perhaps, but thou hast thy husband, and he is better than ten sons. Or if thou hast lost thy husband also, yet thou hast thyself; and why should a living man

^c Job xlii. 12.

^d James v. 11.

complain? And thou hast God himself, whom nothing can take away from thee. Or, if thou hast him not, yet thou mayest have him; and who knows but that therefore thou hast lost thy friends, because thou hast not him? God hath taken them away, that thou mayest seek after him. Wouldest thou have been willing that all thou hast should have been lost rather than this one friend? Shall God raise him from the dead, and all the rest go into his tomb? Wilt thou have all, or else take comfort in none? Then God may well take away all, and let thee have something to cry for. Yea, who is there destitute of all friends and comforters? Job himself was not so spoiled, that they had robbed him of his friends. Though they did add indeed to his grief, yet it was their mistake, and not their want of love. And if we should have no better, then we may give God thanks, that he lets us see more than all our friends. Yea, it is a great mercy that God gives us time to cease our grief and trouble. And perhaps we

have riches, and a pleasant dwelling, delightful walks, &c. Or if we have not, and can bear that patiently, then we may soon learn how to bear this. Do the poor people of Norway weep when they eat, because their bread is made of the barks of trees, and sometimes of chaff;^e not of corn, as ours is? If there were no trees, nor chaff, nor any such thing to fill their mouths, they might well cry; but as long as we have what is needful, we should be content, for nothing is so needful as that. Let us not then weep because we have not so many friends as we had, for we have more than we deserve. Let us not mourn as though we were desolate, when we want but one; no more than we complain of hunger when we have all variety of cheer, except one dish that we love most.

But, fourthly, Let us compare ourselves (if you please) with others. In other cases this is a thing we love to do, though there be so much danger in it that it may undo us.

^e Barthol. cent. 4, Hist. An. cap. 16.

If we be guilty of any fault, then we comfort ourselves in comparisons, and think that we are not so bad as others. Now that which we are apt to do when we do ill, we ought to do when we think we suffer ill. Is God more unkind to us than to any of our neighbours? Do not we see that many of our neighbours' children are dead, as well as ours? Many of them have lost four or five, and we have lost but one. Nay, many of them never had any, and yet they do not therefore mourn, and besmear their faces with tears, and break their hearts with sighs. Our case is the very same now that we have none, but only that it is a little better, because we had once some. And how thankful should we be that we had them so long, if it be desirable to have them at all. But then we may say further to ourselves, How many of them have lost their friends in the late wars? How many hath the sword made widows, and the blood of how many of their children hath it drunk? Ours were taken away by the hand of God,

but theirs were taken away by the hands of men. Our friends died in their beds, and theirs died in the field; ours went, and theirs were driven out of the world. Come, let us go comfort our neighbours that have lost more than we, for they stand more in need of comfort. If they stand in need of none, then no more do we.

It was very handsomely discoursed by Socrates, as Plutarch relates,^f that if we could all agree to put all the troubles and calamities of men into one heap, on this condition, that after every man had brought his and thrown them there, then they should all come again and take every man an equal portion of them, there would be a great many that now complain, who would rather take up what they brought, and go their ways contented with them.

And so Antimachus, an ancient poet, when his wife died, whom he loved exceedingly, he went and writ a poem bearing her name, wherein he reckoned up all the calamities that

^f De Consol. ad Apollon.

he could remember had befallen any in the world. By this means he did deter himself from grief; for how can one suffer the miseries which others endure, if he cannot bear this light one of his own?

Fifthly, Let us compare ourselves with the ancient Christians. Their children were snatched out of their arms by the hands of tyrants. They saw their brains dashed out against the stones; their friends were buried in fires, or banished into strange places; and they had no comforters left but God and themselves; and their chiefest comfort was, that they must shortly die the same death. But notwithstanding all this, and much more, they did not take it heavily, but *Εὐχαρίστως ἤνεγκαν*, &c (as Photius speaks) They bore it all thankfully, and blessed God, who could tell how to govern the world beyond all the thoughts of men. Let not us who suffer but common things, weep with an extraordinary sorrow, when they who suffered most unnatural deaths did bear

g Epist. cccxxiv.

it with more than natural courage. They might have been allowed to have wept blood, rather than we to shed tears. And yet they rejoiced as if their friends had been offered in sacrifice to God; and we weep as if they had been put to some shameful torments for their crimes. Shall we mourn more for the death of a friend, than they for a butchery? What arguments had they to comfort them, which we have not? What Scripture had they before their eyes to stay their tears, which we read not? If either of us have more to comfort us than the other, it is we; for we have their most excellent example. And when I think of the mother of the seven brethren mentioned in the Maccabees,^h she calls my thoughts back a little further than the times of Christ. Did she wring her hands when she saw the skin of her son flayed off from his head? Did she cast any tears into the fire wherein another of them was fried? No, she speaks as cheerfully as if they were not strip-

^h Maccabees ii. 7.

ping them of their skins, but clothing them with a royal robe. She looks upon them, not as if they lay upon a pan of coals, but in a bridal bed. She exhorted them, being filled with a courageous spirit, saying, "I cannot tell how you came into my womb, for I neither gave you breath, nor life, neither was it I that formed the members of every one of you. But doubtless the Creator of the world, who formed the generation of man, and found out the beginning of all things, will also of his own mercy give you breath and life again, as you now regard not your own selves for his sake."¹ This marvellous woman, (as she is called, v. 20) knew very well that she did not give them life, and therefore why should she take so heavily their death? She considered they were none of hers, and why should not the owner take them? She knew that she did not lose them, but only restored them: that life sometimes is not worth the having: that unless God will have us live, no wise

¹ V. 21, 22.

man would desire to live: that none gives any thing unto God, though it be his own, but he gives them something better. And therefore she said, Die, my sons, for that is the way to live.

What poorness of spirit then is it, that we cannot see a soul put off her clothes without so much ado? That a Jewish woman could see seven souls torn out of their body, with more courage than a Christian man can see one soul quietly depart and leave its lodging? I would wish every one to save his tears till some other time, when he may have some greater occasion for them. If he will weep much, let it be when he sees the bodies of his children or friends so mangled as theirs were. But if he would not weep out his eyes then, let him weep soberly, and not as if he were drunk with sorrow now.



SECTION VII.

SEVERAL REASONS ARE GIVEN AGAINST IMMODERATE SORROW, WHICH ARE COMPRISED IN FOURTEEN QUESTIONS, WHICH WE SHOULD MAKE TO OURSELVES.

AFTER we have taken this course with ourselves, we shall be the more prepared to hearken unto reason. And let us proceed from making comparisons, to ask ourselves some questions, and stay till they give a good answer. Let us know of ourselves why we are so sad and heavy? Let us speak to our souls, and say, Tell me, what is the matter? What is the cause of all this grief? Thou art a rational creature, what reason hast thou for all this sorrow? Thou art not to be pitied merely for thy tears, if thou canst cry without any cause. Hideous things appear sometimes before us to affright us; but they are the chimeras of a childish imagination, and not

things really existent. Let us bid fancy, then, to stand aside awhile, and let reason speak what it is that so troubles us. Children cry who cannot speak, and we are not much troubled at it, because they cry for they know not what. Unless we, therefore, can tell why we weep, nobody will pity us, because it is not weeping that we are to mind, but the cause of men's weeping. Let me, then, propose these questions to be answered, some of which will discover that there is no cause of sad lamentations when our friends die. And if there be no cause that the fountain of tears should run, that is cause enough to stop it up. -

I. For whose sake dost thou weep? For the sake of him that is dead, or for thy own? Not for him that is dead sure, for we suppose him to be happy. Is it reasonable to say, Ah me! what shall I do? I have lost a dear friend that shall eat and drink no more. Alas! he shall never hunger again; never be sick again; never be vexed and troubled; and

which is more, he shall never die again? Yet this is the frantic language of our tears, if we weep for the sake of him that is gone. Suppose thy friend should come to thee, and shake thee by the hand, and say, My good friend, why dost thou lament and afflict thy soul? I am gone to the paradise of God, a sight most beautiful to be beheld, and more rare to be enjoyed. To that paradise am I flown, where there is nothing but joy and triumph, nothing but friendship and endless love. There am I, where the Head of us all is, and where we enjoy the light of his most blessed face. I would not live if I might again, no, not for the love of thee. I have no such affection to thy society, (once most dear unto me) that I would exchange my present company to hold commerce with thee. But do thou rather come hither as soon as thou canst. And bid thy friends that they mourn not for thee when thou diest, unless they would wish thee to be miserable again. If we should have such a short converse with one of our acquaintance,

what should we think? what should we say? Should we fall a mourning and crying again? Would it open a new sluice for our tears to flow out? Would we pray him to go to heaven no more, but stay with us? Would we entreat him to beg of God that he might come and comfort us? If not, then let us be well content, unless we can give a better reason for our immoderate tears, than our love to him. Holcoth* reports of a learned man that was found dead in his study with a book before him: a friend of his was exceedingly amazed at this sight when he first came into the room; but when he looked a little further, he found his fore-finger pointing at this place in the Book of Wisdom, chap. iv. verse 7. *Δίκαιος ἐὰν φθάσῃ τελευτῆσαι ἐν ἀναπαύσει ἔσται.* “But though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest.” And when he observed this, he was as much comforted, as he was before dejected. We have no reason to lament them who are made immortal, and that live with God. If

* In iv. Sap. v. 7.

we respect them only, we should carry them forth as the Egyptians did the great prophet of Isis when he died,¹ not with howlings and sorrow, but with hymns and joy, as being made an heir *πρὸς τῶν κρείττονων*, with our betters, and gone to possess most glorious things.

The truth of it is, if it were rational love to him that expresseth these tears, then we should not begin them so soon, nor make such a noise, nor cry when men are dying. For the sad countenances and the miserable lamentations wherewith we encompass sick men's beds, make death seem more frightful to them, than it is in itself. What misery am I falling into (may a man think) that causes them to make such a moan? What is this death, that makes even them look so ghastly who are not like to die? What a mischief is it to leave so many sad hearts behind me, and to go myself (it should seem by them) to some sad and dismal place also? I tell you, a

¹ Heliod. l. vii. *Æthiop.*

dying man had need have a double courage, to look both death and them in the faces, or else their indiscreet shrieks and lamentations will make a poor soul fall into such dark and cloudy thoughts. Men are fain, therefore, to say that it is indeed love to themselves that forces them thus to bemoan the death of their friends. But what are you, that cannot be contented one should be made much better, by making of you a little worse? Is this the great love you pretend to your friend, that you are extremely sorry he is gone to heaven? Are you a friend, that look more at your own small benefit, than at his great gain? Was he not much beholden to you for your love, that would have had him lived till you were dead, that he might have been as miserable in mourning for you, as you think now yourselves to be? But what is it, I beseech you, that you thus bemoan yourselves for? Because that you are now miserable? No, it seems that you are not miserable enough, and that makes you weep so much. If you had some

greater trouble befallen you, that would put the lesser out of your mind. If you were sick, or in pain, or had lost all your goods, these things could take your mind off from this loss. Why then cannot the enjoyment of your health, and ease, and plenty, do as much for you? When Joab did but threaten David that they all would leave him, unless he would be comforted,^m then he could wipe his face, and appear in public as a man well pleased. Fear of losing his kingdom put away the grief for the loss of his son. And therefore let us not speak of our being forlorn and miserable by this loss, for at last we find it is not so. But how doth it appear that mere self-love is the original of these tears? Suppose this person to have been at so wide a distance from us for a year or two, that no tidings of him could come to us. Did we weep and lament all that while because he was not with us? Did not the thoughts that he lived, and hopes to see him again, comfort

^m 2 Samuel xix. 7.

us? And yet, was he not then in a manner dead, when we neither saw, nor felt, nor heard from him? What help did we receive from him at that distance; or wherein did he pleasure us? If we did not account ourselves so miserable all that time as to spend it in tears, we ought not to do it now. We are now as we were then; in all things the very same, save only in the knowledge that he is dead. But was he not dead, as I said, to us before? Was he not like a man in another world? What was there that he did for us, which we do not now receive at his hands? Let us be as quiet now, as we would have been on such an occasion; especially since we know our friend still lives, and we have hope to see him again. Natural affection, I confess, in either case will make us big with sighs, and burst forth often into tears. We feel we are not as we were before. There is something wanting, which we formerly enjoyed. And it is an old acquaintance, perhaps, which nature cannot but be loath to part withal.

Get a new nature then, and that will mend all. Though the first motions be so free, that they owe no tribute to reason, yet when they come, we shall be careful not to follow them; if we do, it will not be very far. Religion and reason, if we hearken to them, will teach us to restrain ourselves. "Religion," as a great person speaks, "will not suffer us not to will what God wills. And reason will teach us to bear those things with an equal mind, which do not happen to us alone; and which we cannot by all our tears make not to have happened."^a They will not let us expect that time should take away this sickness from us. That is the remedy of vulgar spirits; *Sapientis est, tempus ipsum antevenire, et dolori ipsi nascenti occurrere*. It is the part of a wise man to outstrip time, and get before it; to prevent a grief that is growing, and strangle it in the very birth. And, indeed, from hence we conclude that it is not mere natural affection either, to which

^a Josephi Scaligeri Epist. cxxxix. ad Is. Casaub.

we commonly owe our sadness and sorrows; but the freshness and presence of the cause of them. For time, as was said, will make us forget them; or if our parents had died a little after we were born, we should never have wept when we came of age, to think that they were departed. It is no hard matter, then, for a considerate person to cease his grief, seeing it depends upon such small causes. And if any one shall say that it is love to the good of the world that makes him mourn for the loss of a useful person; he hath reason to rejoice that he loves the good of men so much. For then he will labour to do much good in the world himself; and he will persuade all the friends he hath remaining, that they would do all the good they can, and repair that loss.

II. But, let me further ask you, Was thy friend God's friend also, or was he not? If he was the friend of God, as well as a friend of thine, why should not he have his company rather than thou? If he was not God's friend,

then he could not be thine either. No man can love us aright, that doth not love God ; and if he do love God, why should we think much that he goes to God ? But, supposing he was very dear to us, then, I say, that if he was *bad*, thou oughtest to have mourned for him before this. For then thy tears might have done some good, which now are altogether unprofitable. “Seven days,” saith the son of Sirach, “do men mourn for him that is dead ; but for a fool and an ungodly man all the days of his life.”^o But if he were a *good* man, then thou needest not mourn now, for thou mayest hope to see him again, if thou art good. Thus thou mayest comfort thyself, my friend is not gone, but gone before. He is separated from us, but not lost. He is absent, but not dead. He hath taken a journey into a far country, and there I may go to see him. What matter is it whether my friend return to me, or I go to him ? None but this, that if he be in a better place, then it is better that I

^o Ecclesiasticus xxii. 12.

go to see him, than that he come to see me. Should we not desire to be better ourselves, and not to have him made worse? Then let us contentedly follow as fast as we can, hoping there where he is to embrace again. We cannot expect him in our house, but he expects us in his. He cannot come down to us, but we may go up to him. He cannot come back, but we may follow after. And there is no difference, as I said, between his visiting of us at our home, and our going to see him at his, but only this, that it is a great deal better for us to see him there where he is, and not where we are now ourselves. Let us not mourn, therefore, for that which cannot be, but rejoice for that which may and will be. And let it comfort us that we shall come together again, but in a better place than we would have it; we shall have our desires fulfilled, but in a more excellent manner than we desire. And if in the mean time he can do us any good, we may be sure we shall not want it.

III. Ask yourselves again, Why should you mourn more for your loss, than be glad for your enjoyment? If there be so much reason to lament the absence of this friend, then it should seem his enjoyment was very valuable. Think, therefore, of the sweetness thou hadst in that, which thou wouldest purchase again with so many tears. Is there no comfort but only in things present? Is it not a piece of our folly to forget what we have enjoyed? Shall we only think what delight we have lost, and not of what we have had? We do not know whether we have lost any, but only that which we had; and that we may think of as much as if he were alive. Of what we have enjoyed we are certain, but there is no certainty of what we should have found in our friend for the time to come. Think, then, of the time past, and rejoice that thou didst find so sweet a friend. Imagine not how long thou mightest have enjoyed him, but think how long thou didst. It was but natural to lose him; but it was supernatural to enjoy him.

THE CONSOLATION

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excessive weeping.

ay, will some passionate person say, but
will rather augment our grief, when we
think that he was so much worth unto us, and
is gone. But that is our fault, if we will
think more and oftener that he is not, than
that he was. How can any body help you, if
you will needs look more upon his departure
than upon his stay? Seeing there is more
reason that you should please yourself in what
is past, it is to be supposed that your thoughts
will be more upon it; and if they be, you can-
not be sad; but if they be not, then you are not
to be cured by reason, but by something else.
When you are apt to fetch a sigh, and say,
Oh, my dear friend is gone! call it in again,
and say, Thanks be to God that I had such an
one to lose. Who would not be willing to
spend some tears after so much joy? But then,
the remembrance of the joy will command that
the tears do not overflow. It is an excellent
saying of Seneca, "I ever think of my friends

All men are born to die, but all men are not born to live so long before they die. All men have acquaintance, but all men have not friends. Therefore, he that hath a friend, and hath him so long, is to acknowledge that God is very much his friend. He was not ours, but was given us by God ; or rather, he was not given, but only lent. We had not the propriety, but only the use. We have not lost any thing that was our own, but only restored that which was another's. And, therefore, now that he is taken away, we are not to be angry that God requires his own, but to be thankful that he hath lent us so long that which was none of our own. And assure yourselves there is nothing more unreasonable than to mourn that God gave us a thing no longer ; and not to rejoice that he gave us that which is so desirable at all. Cease your tears, I beseech you, unless you will shew that you deserved to have wept a little sooner. Either say that he was not worth the having, and then you need not weep at all ; or else give God the thanks that you had

a person so worthy, and that will stay your immoderate weeping.

Nay, will some passionate person say, but this will rather augment our grief, when we think that he was so much worth unto us, and yet is gone. But that is our fault, if we will think more and oftener that he is not, than that he was. How can any body help you, if you will needs look more upon his departure than upon his stay? Seeing there is more reason that you should please yourself in what is past, it is to be supposed that your thoughts will be more upon it; and if they be, you cannot be sad; but if they be not, then you are not to be cured by reason, but by something else. When you are apt to fetch a sigh, and say, Oh, my dear friend is gone! call it in again, and say, Thanks be to God that I had such an one to lose. Who would not be willing to spend some tears after so much joy? But then, the remembrance of the joy will command that the tears do not overflow. It is an excellent saying of Seneca, "I ever think of my friends

with joy ; for I had them as if I should lose them, and I have lost them as if I had them.”^p If we could but think of them as dying while they are alive, then we should more easily think of them as alive when they are dead. If we could be willing to part with them when we have them, we should think that we have them when we have parted with them. And the truth is, we cannot please ourselves long in the remembrance of them, unless it be accompanied with some joy. I do not advise you to forget your friends, and put them out of mind, but to remember them, and keep them in your thoughts. But how short a remembrance, saith the same Seneca, must that be, which is always joined with grief and sorrow ? If we would remember one always, we must remember him with pleasure ; for no man will return willingly to that which he cannot think of without his torment. And if there be any little grief intermixed with our thoughts,

^p Habui illos tanquam amissurus, amisi tanquam habeam.—
Epist. lxiii.

yet that grief hath its pleasure. As the sharpness of old wine doth make it more acceptable to men's palates, and as apples are more grateful for their sour sweetness, so Attalus was wont to say, that the remembrance of our friends is the more pleasant for that little sorrow that is mingled with it.

IV. Ask yourselves again, Why so many mourn for one? Could that one have mourned more for you all, than every one of you do for him? If you will weep, weep only your part, and do not weep as if there was none else to weep but yourselves. If a man that was not acquainted with the world should see ten, or twenty, or a greater number, sitting in a room, and miserably bemoaning of themselves, would he not ask what town was burnt, or what family was dead, that caused so many mourners? How much then would he be astonished when he heard the answer, that you had lost a friend, a child, or some one of your other relations? What! are there so many tears due (would he think) from every man of these upon the score

of one creature only? Must so many be ready to die, because one hath taken his leave of them? Can there be no comfort found among so many of you against the death of a single person? Methinks you should all of you together weep no more for the death of one, than that one would have wept for you, if you had been dead altogether. Look, therefore, upon one another, and say, you are still left behind, and I am left, and here are twenty more of our friends alive; how is it, then, that we are discontented, as if we had not lost one amongst us all, but every one of us had lost one? If there had been but one of us left, what could he have done more, than what every one of us doth? Could he shed more tears for the loss of us all, or make himself more sad than we now are? Either let us say, that one and ten are equal, or let us not shed as many tears for one as we would for ten; much less ten times as many tears as there would be for that number; for but one would weep for ten, and here are ten that

weep for one. Divide your grief, then, and let every one bear a part, but not the whole ; for that is as if you had none to bear it with you.


V. Ask thyself, Who is it that governs the world ? Is it the will of God, or thy will, that thou prayest may be done ? Shall not he that made a thing have leave to dispose of it as he thinks good ? By what law is it that he shall not do what he pleases with his own ? Must we have our wills in all things, and must not he have his will also ? Must not he be pleased as well as we ? If we think it so reasonable to have what we will, then it is more reasonable that he should have what pleases him. Now, if our will and his will cannot stand together, which shall bend and submit themselves to the other ? Is not his will most wise ? If he had considered better, would he have done otherwise ? Could we have told him what would be most fit for us ? If we had been of his counsel, should not this friend have been taken away ? Doth he will things be-

cause he will? Perhaps there is no reason at all for our wills, and we are in love with a thing, we know not why. Shall we think that he is so in like manner? Or if we have any reasons, are not his better? We would have the life of a child, that he may be a comfort unto us: God will have us to part with him, that he himself may be our only comfort. We should choose his life, that he might enjoy the things that we have got; but God thinks fit that he should die, that we may put our estates to better uses, whereby we are assured he may be more glorified. Or perhaps we desire our children may live for God's glory sake, that they may honour and serve him in the world. But cannot he tell what is best for his own glory? Is he so careless of that as to take away the things without which he cannot be served? Let us, then, cease our complaints, unless we would have him to let us govern the world. But he was taken away, will some say, before his time, else I should be content. I shall answer this as Photius

doth, who accords with Basil the great, before mentioned, *Μὴ μοὶ γένοιτο τοιαύτην φωνήν ἀκούσαι,*¹ Let me hear no such word, I beseech you ; a word too bold to be spoken, and more bold to be thought. Before the time, do you say ? Then why was he not thought to come before the time, when he came out of his mother's womb ? There is no reason for it but this, that it was the will and pleasure of God that he should be born at such a time. And must God appoint the time of his birth, and we set the time of his death ? Did the Workman give him a being in good time, and take him to himself, not knowing the fittest season ? From a drop he made him to become a lump of flesh. He formed the flesh into parts, he brought him into the light, and he kept him in his infancy and childhood. Was any of these out of due time ? Why then should it be out of season when he translated him to another life ? Let us do, therefore, as David did, who prayed and

¹ Epist. ccxxxiv.

wept as long as he could hope the decree of God was not absolute concerning his child's death; but when he saw that it was irreversible, he comforted himself. Let us always say, as Job doth, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." And let this be further considered to the enforcing of this truth, that if the will of the Lord must be borne, then it must be done. And his will is, that we should take all things patiently, yea, cheerfully, from his hands. And therefore, if we mourn immoderately, what do we but only add sin unto our pain? As there is a time to laugh, so there is a time to weep: but there is no more time to weep superfluously, than there is to laugh idly and profusely. Both in the one and in the other we must be wholly subject to the will of God. But that will of God, as I said, is very wise in every thing, and therefore he intends to turn our mourning into laughter, and by every sad thing that doth befall us, to make our hearts glad. He always gives something better



than he takes away, if we would but seek after it; and oftentimes he takes one thing away, that we may seek after the better. But alas! our blindness is so great, that we value not that which brings us profit, unless it be sweet to our taste. We let our passion judge, and not our reason; and therefore we think there is no good in a bitter cup, and no danger in a pleasant draught. We lament and mourn, when we ought to think ourselves great gainers; and we rejoice and leap, when perhaps a cross of the greatest burden hath befallen us. Let us stay awhile, therefore, and expect the end of things before we mourn too much. And let us but desire to be cured, rather than pleased; to have our souls amended, rather than our fancy humoured; and we shall have great reason to thank God for every thing that comes to us.

VI. And this will lead me to another consideration, concerning the goodness of God in all that he doeth. Ask thyself, therefore, Doth not God do all things for our good?

Do we wish better to ourselves than God doth? Hath not he the greatest care of all his creatures, to see that it be well with them? Did he make them for any other end than that they might be happy? Is there the least sparrow, as I said before, that falls to the ground without our Father's providence? Then mankind must needs be under a greater love, and none of them can die by chance, but by his direction. And above all other men, he hath a singular care over the persons of good Christians, the very hairs of whose heads are all numbered. If not so much as an hair can drop off without him, much less can any body of them fall into their graves, but he hath a hand in it. But still he hath a more special providence over such Christians as are fatherless and widows, helpless and destitute of all succour. And therefore, as it was his goodness that took their friends away, so much more will his goodness take care of them whom he hath left none else to take care of. He considers us not only as his children,

but as children placed in the midst of such and such circumstances, as desolate and sad, as left only to his providence and tuition. And therefore it is that the Psalmist saith, "Thou art the helper of the fatherless."^r And in another place, "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation."^s "I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high."^t Yea, and all good men are full of compassion to such persons: so that "the blessing of those that are ready to perish" comes upon them, and they cause "the widow's heart to sing for joy."^u

It is an excellent saying of the royal philosopher Antoninus, worthy to be engraven upon our minds: "If there be a God, then nothing can be hurtful to us, for he will not involve us in evil. But if either there be none, or he take no care of men's matters, what shall I live for in a world that is without

^r Psalm x. 14.^s Ibid. lxxviii. 5.^t Ibid. lxxix. 29.^u Job xxix. 13.

a God, or without a providence? But there is a God, and he cares for men also, and hath put it into their power not to fall into those things which are truly evil. And for the rest that befall us, if any thing of them had been evil, he would have provided that we should have been able not to have fallen into that either.”^v But if this great person had known also that God leaves us not alone to our own power, when he sends any thing upon us, but that he hath a peculiar love to his servants when they are in trouble, and affords them his assistance, he would have said on this sort, “If we be not alone without God, then nothing need discomfort us, for he is the God of all comfort. If we be alone, then we had need to be most discomforted for that, and never endure in a condition without God. But we are not alone, and we are least alone when we are alone; and have him most, when we have other things least. Therefore, he hath put it

^v Εἰ μὲν Θεοὶ εἰσιν, οὐδὲν δεινόν. Κακῷ γὰρ τε οὐκ ἂν περιβάλοιεν, &c. 1 ib. ii. sect. 11.

into our power not to be troubled, but to go to him for comfort in all that befalls us; and if there were no comfort in him for us in such cases, then they should not have befallen us. Let us not, therefore, mourn as long as we have a God; and as long as all things make us seek for our comfort in him."

VII. Let us ask ourselves, How long we ought to mourn? Doth any man intend to continue it all his life? Then he may fall into the follies of Augustus, who made the image of his nephew, whom he dearly loved, be placed in his bed-chamber, that he might kiss it and embrace it daily. Or the dotage of Alexander will be a fit punishment for us, who built temples, and commanded sacred solemnities every year, for his beloved Ephestion. Do you intend every year to have a funeral sermon? to go and weep over their graves at that time, as you do when they are first put into them? If not, set some measure to your mourning, for of itself it knows no measure. And if you intend not to weep always, why

can you not cease now ? If it be not a thing to be lamented for ever, why should it be so sadly lamented at all ? Decency, indeed, doth require some mourning, and natural affection must be allowed its tears ; but we must stay them as soon as may be, and not mourn as if we thought we could never mourn enough. For if we think so, then we must mourn always, or else we shew that we had no reason to mourn so much. But if any man be resolved to let the sorrow take its course, and run as far as ever it can, let me tell him, that either his sorrow will spend him, or else it will spend itself, and so be cured without any thanks at all to him. It is a trite thing which I am going to add ; but (to speak with Seneca) I will not therefore forbear to speak it, because it is spoken by all : So it falls out that “ he who will not put an end to his own grief, time will end it for him.” But this is most dishonourable, as hath been already said, to expect, till it put an end to itself, when it can run no longer, and not to end it our own selves

by not permitting it to run at all without our leave. To be weary of weeping is the basest remedy for grief. It is far better for us to leave grief, than to let it leave us. It is a shame to let time conquer that, which hath conquered us. Seeing it must cease, let it cease by our valour and strength, not by its own weakness. Let it die by our hands, and not merely because it can live no longer.

We are weary of nothing sooner than of grief; and therefore let us cease that, which if we would, we cannot long continue. It is well observed by Pliny the Second,* that as a crude wound is very angry under the surgeon's hand, but in a short time doth both suffer it and require it; so a fresh grief doth use to reject and despise all comfort, but shortly after not only receives it most courteously, but also desires and expects it. And seeing if it can find no comfort it will fairly cease itself, it is more like men that we should comfort ourselves, and put a period to it.

* Lib. v. Epist. 16.

VIII. Ask thyself again, To what purpose is all my mourning? Every wise man intends some good to himself in what he doeth; and therefore, unless sorrow will do us some good, it is a foolish thing to indulge unto it. But can any man that hath had his fill of it, tell us what satisfaction it hath given him? May we not put all our gains in our eyes (as the proverb is) after they have wept so immoderately? Doth any may say he is glad that he mourned so much? Then he had best mourn again, if there be so much gladness and profit in it. Had we not better say with David, concerning his child when it was dead, I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me? I may bring myself in sorrow to my grave, but I cannot bring him up from the dead. I cannot water him with my tears, as we do a dry plant, that he may spring up again; but I may easily drown myself, and learn others by my example not to weep so much for me. What I would not have them do for me, why should I do for another? Why

should I make myself miserable, and make nobody else the better? The truth is, if there were only no good in it, it were the less matter; but it doeth us likewise not a little harm. Though it will end of itself, yet it may breed us no small trouble before it end. This is all the comfort that such a man hath, and it is a very poor one; that if his grief do not kill him, it will kill itself. ^γ But many an one hath grief destroyed; many a body hath it distempered; and given most mortal wounds also to the soul itself. Many affections move the soul most vehemently, but none more than grief, which hath been the cause of madness in some, (as Plutarch hath observed) and in others hath bred incurable diseases, and made others destroy themselves. And this it may do either *naturally*,—for nothing eats the heart so much as grief, nothing casts such a damp on the vital spirits as immoderate sorrows,—or else *providentially* by God's anger.

^γ Πολλοὺς ἀπώλεσε λύπη, οὐ μόνον Σῶμα διαφθείρασα, &c.—Pho. Epist. ccxxxiv.

who is displeased to see us so angry and repining, and often inflicts worse things upon us than those which we causelessly make the matter of so doleful complaints. Let us, therefore, cease that which brings such troubles, before it cease itself; and when it is ceased, give us a new sorrow, to think that we should be so unreasonably sorrowful.

We must write upon this, as well as upon inordinate joys, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." And therefore let us not be troubled now, lest we be troubled more afterward, to consider how foolishly we were troubled. The fable of Niobe, which tells how she turned herself with sorrow into a stone, doth but signify the stupidity and dulness that waits upon grief, and the excessive melancholy into which it sometimes casts us, which renders us as insensible as a stone. Take heed how you grow in love with sadness, for it hath no profit wherewithal to recompense your affection to it, but pays your folly only with itself, and such diseases as ordinarily use

to accompany it. And we should be the less in love with it, because there are so many occasions of it in our lives. We need not weep so much for the loss of one thing, for we must expect continual losses. The world is not such a place that we should take care to spend all our tears at one time ; we shall have occasion enough for them, if we have any mind to weeping. Let us bestow, therefore, the less upon one, because there are so many objects to solicit our sorrows. And if our souls be tender, and apt to receive the impressions of doleful things, we have the more need to comfort ourselves ; for every grief will but make us still more apt to grieve.


And besides, what a folly is it thus to die with continual grief for him, who if he did grieve to die, his grief continued but a little while. He died but once ; why should we die always ? It is certain we must die, but of all deaths let us not die with grief ; and much less for grief about that which we see we cannot avoid ourselves. But let us be fur-

theft of all from making our life a perpetual death; and grieving for that, which by grief we may so soon run ourselves into.

IX. Ask thyself again, Whether two friends do not think that one of them must die first? Do we not see that in the common course of things, one man goes before another to his grave? Who then (if it had been permitted to thy choice) wouldest thou have appointed to be the leader unto the other? Wouldest thou have given thyself the pre-eminence, and resolved to have shewn him the way? Then death it seems is a good thing; for if it were evil, we can scarce believe thy self-love is so little as to wish it might be thy portion before another's. And if it be good, then thou mayest soon satisfy the pretence of loving them better than thyself, by being glad that they enjoy it before thyself. Or wouldest thou have had both gone together, and been enclosed in the same coffin, and interred in the same grave? Then it seems it is no such great matter to die, as thou makest it, seeing thou art so

willing to die also. And if it be no great matter for thee to live, then no more was it unto him. If the sorrow of living without him, be greater than the sorrow of dying with him, why then was not he desirous that thou shouldest die? And why did he pray for thy life and health when he died? And if he would not have thee to die also when he died, why dost thou then live in a kind of death, and enjoyest not thyself, nor the pleasures of life? Either resolve to die also, or else to live as a man should do.

X. Ask thyself, How can I take my own death? Certain it is that thou must die also; but if thou canst not part with a friend, how canst thou part with thyself? How wilt thou endure that soul and body should be separated, if thou canst not shake hands with another body distinct from thine? Are not they the most ancient friends? Is not their union more strict and close? Can two men cleave so together as thy soul embraces its companion? What then wilt thou do when their bonds shall



be untied, if thou canst not bear the rupture of lesser cords of love? What wilt thou think when thy soul sits on thy lips, and gives thy body a farewell kiss, if thou canst not close the eyes of thy friend without so many tears? Will thy soul mourn after thy body is dead, as thou dost now lament the death of thy friend? Will it groan and sigh, to think of the hole where its flesh lies? Will it sigh to think that its old companion is then become the companion of worms? If not, then let it not groan so heavily for a less matter that is now befallen it. If it will, then why art thou troubled for thy friend, and not for thy own self, to think how sad thou must one day be? The fear of thy own death, must more than equal thy sorrow for the death of another man. And how canst thou have time to think on any thing else, if thou dost fear it? Or if thou dost not fear it, how canst thou fall under thy sorrow, who hast overcome so great a fear?

Dost thou intend to go crying out of the world? If not, then be not now dismayed at

that which thou must bear so valiantly thyself. Then do not mourn so much for the loss of another's life, which will but put self-love into a most piteous case, when thou comest to yield up thy own. Death is no strange thing, (as I have said), for we must all die. But then, why should we mourn so much, if it be such an usual thing? If we mourn excessively, it is a sign we think not of the commonness of it; and then how shall we take our own death, seeing it is such a stranger to our thoughts? Let us but comfort ourselves upon solid grounds against our own departure, and I will warrant you that shall cure all our other lamentations. Let us but dare to die ourselves, and we shall not dare to cry so much for any man's death.

Isidore, of Pelusium,^z thinks that our Saviour did not mourn for his friend Lazarus because he was dead, (for he knew that he was going to raise him from the dead), but because he was to live again; and to come

^z Lib. ii. Epist. 17.

from the haven where he was arrived, back again into the waves and storms; from the crown which he enjoyed, to a new encounter with his enemies.

If thou dost not believe his interpretation, yet dost thou believe the thing? Dost thou seriously consider that the misery of this world is so great, that we should rather weep that we are in it, than that others are gone out of it? Then I ask thee again, whether, when thou art dead and well, thou wouldest willingly live again? If not, then thou knowest what to say to thyself concerning thy friend's death. If thou wouldest, then it seems thou canst be contented with this grief; and I will not go about to comfort thee, seeing thou lovest life with all the miseries thou createst to thyself.

But the very truth is, we are so sensible of our bodies, and have so little feeling of our souls or divine things, that it is ready to make us think we are not, when our bodies are dead. This makes death such a terrible thing. This

makes both our own and others' death so heavy, because it seems as if there were an extinction of us. That which we feel not, nor have any sense of within us, is as if it was not. And therefore, if we feel not heavenly things, and perceive not that we have a soul, we shall receive death as if it was the loss of ourselves, and then who can but be sad? Let us live, therefore, in a sense of such things as may make us die willingly, and think that we ourselves are not lost; and then we shall not think that we have lost our good friends, nor lay their death so much to heart.

XI. Ask thyself likewise, How wilt thou be able to comfort others, if thou canst not comfort thyself? It should seem by thy tears that thou art very ambitious of the name of a friend; but if thou be not able to comfort thy friend, what is he the better for thee? And how didst thou deserve to have the friend which thou hast lost? If thou art able, or hast ever given any comfort unto others, administer then the same cordials to thyself.

Why should not that satisfy thee, which thou expectedst with so much reason should satisfy them? What thou wouldest say to another if his friend was dead, that say to thyself. And if thou wouldest wonder that he should reject all comfort, then do not make thyself a wonder. Didst thou never tell any man that it is a shame to be impatient, when we can cure ourselves; that they suffer nothing but what God and nature have appointed; that we must all expect such losses; that nobody knows whose turn is next? Take, then, thy own counsel, and be not such a physician as cannot cure himself at all. Is thy distemper different from theirs? Are there not the same griefs and maladies in their minds? Then the same medicine will cure thee that thou gavest them. Or if it would not cure them, then thou wast much to blame that didst not seek a better both for them and thee. Or is thine some strange loss, the like to which never any suffered? Then this may comfort thee, that thou shalt never suffer the like again. For it

would be more strange, if a thing that never came before should twice fall upon one man. If it be so strange to thee, then thy courage will be as strange to others. If thou art drawn into an example of sufferings, then thou mayest render thyself an example to all of patience and contentedness. And so Seneca saith of the brother of Drusus, that though Drusus died in the midst of his embraces, and with his kisses warm upon his mouth; though he died in the very height of his fortune, with the most warlike nations dead at his feet; yet he not only put a measure to his own grief, but taught all the army how to be moderate also. And indeed he could not have stopped the tears of others, unless he had been of so brave a spirit as first to stop his own. If thou art a friend therefore unto any, let them all learn of thee how to be well satisfied. Comfort thyself as thou hast comforted others, or else as thou dost intend to comfort them. And let it be seen by thy worthy behaviour toward thyself, that thou art worthy to be a friend to another person.

XII. Ask thyself again, Whether friends only be mortal? Do none die but they that love us? Must not all our enemies, and they that hate us, die also? Death, then, that makes thee sad, may give thee comfort. As it puts an end to some comforts, so it is the common end of all miseries. Though we may not wish for the death of any, yet it is no harm to think that they must die who hate us, and their rage shall not last for ever. If nothing can cease their malignity, yet death can. It hath done us then no such wrong, but what it can repay us with the same hand that did it. Though we have now no friend, yet shortly we may have no enemy neither. This was one support to the Christians under their persecutions, that though their enemies (like Saul) did breathe out nothing but threatenings and slaughters against them, yet their breath was but in their nostrils, and might soon evaporate and vanish away. Julian, called the apostate, had done more hurt to the Christians than the ten persecutions, if death had not suddenly wounded him with one of his arrows.

The Marian flames had devoured in all likelihood a great many more bodies, if death had not shortened her reign, and so extinguished the fires. We have no reason, then, to look upon it as unkind, which may do us so many courtesies; nor to accuse that of cruelty to us, which destroys the cruelty of others towards us.

XIII. And now may you not well make one question more to yourselves, and say, Is there not more reason to be comforted, than there is to be sad? If there be, (as certainly there is,) what should hinder your comfort, if you live by reason? If you do not live by it, then nothing that a man can say will comfort you. Nothing will cheer us, unless we think of it, and make it our own by meditation: neither will any thing sadden us, unless we think of it also. Seeing, then, they are our own thoughts that make us either sad or merry, and we have more comfortable thoughts than heavy, we cannot but be of good cheer, if we will not be enemies to ourselves. All .

that we can say for our sadness is, that we have lost a friend, a very dear, and perhaps only friend. But you have heard that there are more in the world, and that you have not lost this; and that you have more comforts remaining than are taken away; and that if you had none but God, you had enough; and if you will read again what hath been said, twenty other reasons will offer themselves to cheer, for one that arises to make you sad. If there were no reason at all to be sad, then none need spend any time in giving comfort. But if they be very few in comparison with others, and we are made to follow the most and strongest reasons, then he is not to be pitied, who notwithstanding the small reason of his sorrow, will not be of good comfort.

The greatest cause that I know of this sort of trouble is, when many that we love die soon after one another. So it happened to that prince (which the L. Montaigne speaks of)^a who received the news of his elder brother's

^a L. i. Essay, cap. 2.

death, whom he highly esteemed, with a great deal of constancy; and shortly after the tidings of his younger brother's decease, in whom he placed much hope, did not alter the smoothness of his countenance. But when one of his servants died not long after that, he suffered himself to be so far transported, that he quitted his former resolution, and gave up himself to all grief and sorrow. The reason of this was not from the love that he bare to his person more than the rest, but (as he well saith) because being top full of sorrow before, the next flood must needs break the banks, or overflow all the bounds of patience.

And so Hier. Cardan tells us,^b that after he had patiently borne many reproaches, and the cruel infamous death of a son of great hopes; and the dangerous sickness of another son, and the death of his parents, and wife, with many other evils; yea, and after he wrote a Book of Consolation against all these evils, yet he was overcome with grief at the death of an English

^b In Dialog. cui tit. Gulielmus.

youth, whom he brought from Dover with him as he passed from Scotland, in the time of Edward the Sixth. And he gives the same reason for it that the other doth; *Fatigatum multis adversis, oppressit me hæc extrema infelicitas*; being wearied before with many griefs, this last unhappiness made me fall to the ground. It was not its strength, but his own foregoing weakness that made him fall. It was not heavy, but it came upon the back of many other loads, and so oppressed him.

But something hath been said to this also; for holy Job was in the same condition, and far worse; one messenger did tread upon the heels of another to bring him tidings of his misery, and yet he was patient, though he himself likewise was in his own body most sadly afflicted. We have the same grounds of comfort that he had, and abundance more than was known in those younger times. And when one cause of trouble falls upon the neck of another, we can add one reason likewise unto another, and so be comforted. For our

troubles can never be so many, as the causes of our consolation are. Yea, one single reason of those that I have propounded will answer all. Do we not know very well that all friends are mortal? Then it can be no new thing (if we well consider it) for two or three to die after we have lost one; but the loss of one doth rather mind us of the mortality of all. And doth not God govern the world in the death of the last, as well as of the first? Then there is no less wisdom and goodness in it when many die, than when one. He that can solidly comfort himself in the death of one, will not be immoderately troubled for the loss of more. If we let our grief indeed work under-ground, while nothing of it appears; if our hearts be loaded with it, though our eyes look not heavily before others; then it is no wonder if it do at last break forth, when the heart is over-charged, and can find no other way to ease itself. But if we take a course to comfort our hearts at the very first, and make them truly contented; or if we let not the

grief settle itself, but labour to dislodge it; then we shall be the better disposed to bear such another cross with the like patience. For then a new trouble doth not come upon the other, but only follows after it. It doth not add to the former, but only comes in its stead; it doth not augment, but only renew our grief.

XIV. And now is it not time to conclude these questions, and to say to yourselves, Why should not reason do that which little or no reason can do? The more we are men, shall we be the less in peace, and cry like children? Nay, children weep while they see their parents put into the grave, and within a day or two they forget their sorrows; why cannot we do so also? Though they know not their loss, yet they know not the reasons neither why they should not be discontented for their loss. Though they have little understanding of their sufferings, yet they have as little knowledge of our comforts and supports. And as for brute creatures, you see that they

make a doleful noise for the loss of their young a very short while, and then they remember it no more. Some of the people of Cous (if I forget not) used at the age of seventy years, either to kill their parents, or pine them to death, and to rejoice much at it. They thought that they had lived long enough, and that it was both a misery to themselves, and a great burden to their children, to have them continue any longer. The Caspians also, and some of the people of Old Spain, had the like custom, which we well call inhuman and barbarous. But why cannot understanding teach us that, which want of understanding taught them? Why should barbarism make them rejoice at what they did themselves, and Christianity make us sad at what is done by God and the order of things? St. Hierome reports that in his time there was at Rome, a man who had had twenty wives, married to a woman who had had two and twenty husbands. There was great expectations which of them should die first; and when the man buried



her, his neighbours crowned him with laurel, and caused him to bear a bough of palm in his hand, in token of a victory, at his wives' funerals. It seems that men can sport at death if they list, and laugh at that which makes so many cry. Why then cannot reason make us moderately sad to bear that, which humour and fancy can make men not to lament at all? Why cannot our religion do more with us, than the people or our friends, who it is like can laugh us sometimes out of our sorrows?

If I have not said too much in this argument, I have some confidence that I have not said too little. And indeed I have said more than I first intended, and so much, that if any have the patience to read it through, methinks the very length of the discourse should make them forget their sorrows, and by thinking so long upon another thing, they should not remember what they thought upon before. One soul is scarce big enough to hold all these considerations, and the thoughts of grief also. Here are so many that they are able to thrust

sorrow out of doors by their multitude, if not by their strength and force.

And yet, notwithstanding, I must detain you a little longer, before I give your thoughts leave to turn themselves to other things. For I am of the mind that all these considerations will only assuage the grief, and pricking of the wound, but will not quite heal it, and take away its putrefaction. I shall, therefore, commend two or three things, for the pressing out all the filthy matter, for the closing of the sore, and to make the soul perfectly whole and sound.



SECTION VIII.

SOME OTHER THINGS ARE PROPOSED FOR THE PERFECT CURE OF THE SOUL; THE FIRST OF WHICH IS DEADNESS TO THE WORLD, AND THE CASTING OUT FALSE OPINIONS; THE SECOND IS THE CHANGING OF OUR SORROW INTO ANOTHER KIND: THE THIRD IS THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS.

I. BE dead to all things, and thou wilt not be offended that they die. Mortify thy spirit to the world and all things that are in it; and when thou hast left them, it will seem no wonder that they leave thee. Think with thyself often that thy friends are dead, that thou seest them carried to the grave, that thou beholdest worms crawling out of their eyes and mouth, and try how thou art able to bear that thought. Think that he or she that lies in thy bed by thy side, is as cold as a stone; think thou embracest the carcase of thy dear friend, and ask thy soul

how it can brook it. Think thus often, and though thy soul may start at the first, yet at last it will be patient. That little sadness will banish and chase away all the greater, that else would seize on thee hereafter. There will be little to do when death comes, if thou constantly doest this. Thy soul will be so loose from them, that thou wilt not give a shriek : none will hear the strings crack when you are separated. Death will not be a breaking of your society, but a fair and easy untying of it. Nothing will happen to you but what you have looked for long before ; and you shall be able to say, This is not the first time that I have seen my dear friend dead. Yea, think with thyself that thou seest thy own body laid in the grave, and that thou feelest thyself as cold as a clod of earth. Think that thou art turned into rottenness and dirt ; and that thou art forgotten by thy neighbours. If thy soul can endure these thoughts, then why should it be troubled at the death of another ? This is a kind of death to be so separated from thy body in thy

thoughts. It is all one not to be in the body, and not to feel that thou art in it. Raise thy mind, then, up toward heavenly things; fix thy thoughts on God and the life to come; think that thou seest thyself in heaven among the saints of God; and while thy soul is there, it is not in thy body here below. This kind of death differs from that which will be hereafter, in this only, that then thou wilt be more perfectly out of thy body. But if there be no trouble in this separation which thou now makest even whilst thou art in it, there will be far less trouble (one would think) quite to part with it, and to get from it.

And the way to be dead to those earthly things is, to change our opinion of them, and to see them to be what indeed they are, empty and unsatisfying, changeable and inconstant. Of this I have spoken before in the former discourse; but seeing it is a thing so great and fundamental to our contentment, let me again present you with it. We are the cause of our own grief, by magnifying the things of the

world to such a value, that the loss of them shall be worth so many tears. We think that they are happy who are rich and honourable, though they be never so wicked and unskilful how to live. We presently cry up a man for wise, and what not? who (to use Arrianus's phrase)^c is preferred by Cæsar, though it be but to be groom of his close-stool. And, on the contrary, we despise virtue if it be in a thread-bare coat; and count him a fool who is unfortunate. No wonder, then, that we cry and whine like children, when we lose any of these worldly things; seeing we think ourselves more happy than men in the enjoyment of them. We think that we are undone when we part with that which we have such an high opinion of; and there is no way to make us think that all is safe, but by altering of that foolish opinion. We expect what cannot be, and will not be content with what may easily be. We cannot make the things of this world

^c Ὅταν Καίσαρ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ λασάνου ποιούσῃ,
&c.—Lib. i. cap. 19.

to be still and quiet, but may make ourselves so: and the way to that quietness is well to consider their inconstancy, and that our happiness is in something better.

It was a good rule which Pythagoras gave to all his scholars, and is the same that I would have you learn, *Τὴν λεωφόρον μὴ βαδίζειν*, Do not walk in the highway. i. e. Do not follow the common opinions; be not led by vulgar and popular apprehensions. Rectify the ordinary conceits which you have carelessly entertained of things, and judge of them as they are in themselves, and not as they are reputed of. If we would do thus, then that which is the cause of our sorrow, would be the cause of our tranquillity; because nothing hath left us, but that which we knew would not stay with us. We mourn now, because things are so inconstant; but then we should not mourn, because we knew them to be inconstant. If we could make it good that any of these things are ours, then I might avouch it, that they would never have left us. But if they were not ours, why

are we offended that God doeth what he will with his own? And besides, shall we who are so inconstant, oblige all things besides ourselves to constancy? Shall we, whose desires are so restless and uncertain, expect that all things but only we should be stable and quiet. No, let us look into ourselves, and we shall find so much difficulty to settle them, that we shall not wonder that other things are unsettled. And again, if things be so mutable, why should we not think (as I have already said) that they will one day change to what we would have them? But suppose they should, what are we the better? If our opinion be not turned too, we shall be as much afraid to lose them again, seeing they are so inconstant, as now we are desirous to have them by the benefit of their inconstancy. We must, therefore, alter our esteem of things now, else we shall only change our trouble, but not be rid of it, when things are changed. *Adeo nihil est miserum nisi cum putes, &c.* So certain it is, that nothing is miserable, but when we

think it is so; and that nothing will make us happy, unless we think that we are happy. And we had better think so now, than stay to be taught this lesson by the dear experience of a great many troubles. Let thine estate be never so prosperous, yet if thine heart be unmortified, thou wilt never be the nearer, but rather the further off from settlement. For they that have the greatest abundance, are the soonest disturbed by every trifle, because they are not used to have any thing go contrary to their humour.

But if thou wilt take any comfort from the inconstancy of things, let it be this; that if thou thinkest thyself therefore unfortunate, because those things are gone that were joyful, then thou mayest think thyself happy enough, seeing the things that are unpleasant are going away also. And think, I beseech you once more, and be of this opinion, that there is nothing better in this world to thee than thyself. As long, therefore, as thou hast thyself, why shouldest thou be troubled, espe-

cially if thou thyself thinkest never the worse of thyself, because thou art poor and destitute of friends? For these take away nothing of thyself, nor can any thing in the world deprive thee of thyself. And as Boethius well saith, This is the condition of human nature, that it then only excels all things here, when it knows itself, but when it doth not, it is below the very beasts; for it is natural for them to be ignorant: but for a man it is the basest vice, especially when he is ignorant of himself.

There was a fable among the heathens which wise men understood to contain in it great philosophy. In the midst of this sad discourse, it will please you, perhaps, if I relate it; and it will please you a great deal more for to learn and live by it. After Jupiter had made the world, he thought that men would not be restrained from sin without rewards and punishments; and so he made two great barrels, the one full of good things, the other full of bad, to be sent down among men as there was occasion. Pandora being very desirous to

know what was in these barrels, did one day broach them, and all the good things flew out towards heaven, and all the bad towards hell. Hope only and Fear remained in the bottom of these casks; the former in that of evil things, and the latter in that of good. When this was done, Jupiter threw down these empty tubs to the earth, and all mortals ran at the rareness of the sight to see what they could find in them. Some looked into the one, and some into the other, and though both of them were empty, yet they thought verily that the one was full of good, and the other full of evil. And ever since it came to pass that here below we have nothing but a fancy or conceit of good mixed with fear and jealousy, and a mere conceit of evil, with some hope in the compound of it. The moral of it is this, that the things of this world are but empty goods, and inconsiderable evils. They are our own opinions that trouble us with the shadow of evil, and that flatter us on the other side with a fair shew of good. All substantial good is in

heaven, and all dreadful misery is in hell. If we go to heaven, we are well enough, whatsoever we lose; if we fall into sin, and so into hell, we cannot be well, though we should enjoy all the world; and while we stay here below, there is no good thing we enjoy but is accompanied with fear; and no evil we suffer but is attended with hope. And there is no hope like that which is laid up in heaven, of enjoying a bliss sincere and pure, without any alloy at all. Let us turn our minds, then, toward these heavenly things which they did but dream of in the dark ages of the world. Let us heartily believe the gospel, which hath brought to light eternal life; and then we shall think ourselves happy enough if we lose not those things: and perhaps the death of our friends, and such like crosses, befall us, that we may not lose them.

The Almighty Goodness draws our thoughts and affections, by these means, from transitory comforts; and calls them up thither where we hope our friends are arrived. See, saith


he, here is your home ; here is your resting place ; here is the immortal inheritance that never fades away. If you love yourselves, mind the way hither ; and suffer nothing to turn you out of it. Whatsoever cross befalls you, take it up and carry it along with you ; let it only spur you to make the more haste to eternal joys ; where, when we are once seated aloft, amidst those glorious objects which then shall encompass us, with what contempt (as an ingenious person speaks)^d shall we look down upon this morsel of earth, which men have divided into so many kingdoms ; or upon this drop of water, whereof so many seas are composed. How shall we smile, to see men so busy about the necessities of a body, to which we no sooner give one thing, but it asks another ; and so disquieted through a weakness of spirit which daily troubles them, as to unwish that to-day, which the day before they wished for. Enter, if it be possible, into these generous thoughts before-hand. Begin

^d M. Malherbe to the Princess of Conti.


to speak of the world, as you will do when you have forsaken it. Acknowledge it to be a place, where you must daily lose something, till you have lost all. And by these and the like meditations, let your soul assuredly conceive, that having had its original from heaven, it is one of the number of those, which must one day return thither.

In the mean time, when the days of mourning come, and sorrow will not be denied its place, let me recommend this advice to every man. As soon as it is possible, turn thy sorrow for thy friend into sorrow for thy sins. Remember, that thy tears may be due to some other thing, and the cure of that will cure all thy other griefs. If thou art not a Christian, then it is thy duty to mourn neither for one thing nor other, but only to bewail thyself. Let the dead bury the dead; (as our Saviour said,) do thou presently follow after thy Lord with tears. Take no care of funerals, think of no earthly thing, but only how thou mayest be a Christian. And if thou art so,

then thou oughtest to rejoice that thy sins are pardoned, and that thou hast not the greatest cause of grief; and this joy sure will swallow up all thy sorrows. There is scarce any thing so considerable in our bodies that is seen, as our tears; for they are the most notable expressions of what is in our hearts. The hands (as Ant. Guevara observes,) do work, the feet do walk, the tongue speaks, but it is the heart only that weeps. The eyes are but the sponges of the heart, through which its affections are drained and dried up. An afflicted heart hath neither hands to labour, nor feet to walk, nor can it find a tongue to speak, but tears are all that it hath to tell you what it wants. And therefore, we ought to reserve these for some greater thing than our dead friends, which our heart ought much to be affected withal. As our Saviour said to the women of Jerusalem, when he was going to the most cruel sufferings, so might our friends say to us when they are dying, Weep not for us, but weep for yourselves, if you be dead while you are alive.



Mourn more than you do, if you have not yet mourned for your sins and amended them. But if you have, then rejoice in the favour of God, and bless him for his Son Jesus, who is better to thee than ten sons, or all thy friends which thou lamentest. Are our sins dead, as well as our friends? have we buried them in the grave of our Lord? are we risen again to an heavenly life? Let us go, then, to God, and pray to him, and praise him, and this will give us ease. But if we be troubled for sin, then sure we shall not add another sin by immoderate sorrow, and forgetfulness of God's goodness. If it be sin we hate, then bitter complaints and discontents must all be hated. Would you indispose yourself to pray, to praise God, and meditate in his sacred word? Would you render yourself unfit to receive the Sacrament of his most blessed body and blood? If not, then mourn but so much as will not hinder any of these, and you have leave to mourn as much as you please. Stop but here, and there is no man will lay any restraints



upon you. But then, how short your mourning must be, you will soon guess, and the sun must not go down upon your grief, no more than it must upon your wrath. But if you take no great care whether you disturb your souls or no, then you have most reason to mourn for that carelessness and neglect. Go, then, and bewail your unkindness to God, your unthankfulness for his mercies, and unbelief of his gospel; for you can never take your hearts in a better time, than when they are so sad, and inclined to be sorrowful. Tell them that now they are very well disposed for a necessary business; and bid them look if there be not something else to bewail that is more considerable. Ask thyself, Hast thou not deserved this, and ten times more? Wilt thou add another sin, when thou shouldest cease all sins? Hast thou not been careless of seeking God? Hast thou not foolishly wasted the precious time? And art thou not troubled at all for that? Yea, art thou now impatient, as if God dealt hardly with thee?

And wilt thou spend more time badly, when thou art taught by the death of thy dear friend how short it is? It is most incongruous thus to bewail the death of a child or acquaintance, when thou art like to die thyself, both body and soul. And when thou hast mourned for thy sins, thou wilt be taught thereby how little thou oughtest to mourn for thy losses. For even our tears for sin must not be immoderate, and therefore much less must we dare to let them flow in abundance for our losses. So you know the great apostle commands the Corinthians to comfort him that had been guilty of a great sin, and receive him again into the Church now that he repented, "lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."^e I wish all those who are ready to destroy themselves with grief, would seriously consider this, that we may not overload our hearts with grief, for our sins themselves, which are the causes of all other sorrows.

^e 2 Corinthians ii. 7.

We cannot please the devil better than by discontent. He would fain oppress every good man with some passion or other ; let us take heed how we join with him against ourselves. If we have left his service, that is enough to provoke him. If we have bid defiance to his pleasures, this doth incense him, and we must expect that he will endeavour to overcome us with griefs.

The devil is mad against all good men ; and therefore, let all those who have irritated him against them, beware how they now prove cowards, and execute his vengeance for him with their own hands. Let us take heed (as Photius excellently expresseth it) lest we be good at stirring up and provoking the envy and rage of our adversary ; but naught at resisting and overcoming him by patience and perseverance to the end. *Κινῆσαι μὲν ἀγαθοὶ, Νικῆσαι δ' ὀκνεροί.*

But if we must needs weep for the loss of something here, let it be for the afflictions of the people of God. Let us mourn to see the

church sit like a widow in her black garments. Let it pity us to see the blood of God's servants shed like water upon the ground. If our own sins do not trouble us, let us weep to see the wickedness of the world, and let our eyes run down with tears, to think that men do not keep God's law. Some such channel we should cut for our tears, and not let them spend themselves on this fashion about our own personal troubles. This is a method both to stop our tears, and likewise to make them useful to us while they run. It is a way to ease us of our present grief, and of all others also. We shall exchange that sorrow that would have troubled us, for a great deal of joy and comfort. Whereas our worldly grief would have left the heart sad, this will leave it light and merry.

III. Believe thoroughly that the Lord Jesus lives, and so thou mayest both expect a resurrection from the dead, and likewise hope for comfort from him when thou art left sad and desolate. The body itself doth not die any

more than corn doth ; which dies, that it may live and spring up again with large gain and advantage. Are we loath to throw the corn into the ground, and do we not patiently expect till the harvest comes ? Why should we then bury our friends with so many tears, seeing they are but laid in the womb of their mother again, that by the power of God they may have a better birth ? The heathen could say much to comfort themselves, but they knew not this comfort ; for indeed they were rather *contented*, than *comforted*. Those that thought themselves most wise, and judged that they had the best supports, did only dream that the soul might take another body, and shift its place at several times : but we know that there will be a time, when even our scattered ashes will fly into one another's embraces again ; and a new life will breathe into our dust, and make it stand upon its feet. And then, in the mean time, if our condition be never so sad, and we be left all alone, why do we not solace ourselves in the great compas-

sion of our High Priest, who hath a feeling of all our miseries which we endure? Can we expect that ever he should love us more than when we are like unto him in sufferings? We should be so far from being sad at what befalls us, that we should think, if our condition was a little worse, we should be more dear unto him than now we are, when nothing extraordinary is happened to us. No man can be alone as long as He lives, who hath said, I will not leave you comfortless like fatherless children; I will come to you. Did not he bid his disciples to be well content, when he himself died? Did he not leave his peace with them, and bid them that their hearts should not be troubled? And what is the death of one of our friends, to the departure of the best friend in the world that ever was, from his little flock of friends? Did not Christ know what he said, when he was going to die? Did he advise them not to be troubled, when it was impossible that they should be otherwise? And if they were not to be troubled then, I am sure we have

less reason to be troubled now ; both because we have a less loss to bewail, and we have a stronger and more excellent comfort against our loss. Our friends are as much below him, as his state in the grave was beneath that to which he is now advanced in the heavens ? Their hearts were not to be troubled when He that is the lover of the world was held in the chains of death, because they knew that he would loose them. Why then should we be disturbed for the death of one, that loves us only, when we know that “ Christ is risen, and that he is in the heavens ; angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him.” If an angel was necessary for our comfort, we should not want his ministry. He is so full of love and compassion towards us, that if he did not think he had left cordials enough to support us, he would come himself to cheer us, and raise our friend, as he did Lazarus, from the dead. But now we may well live in hope, “ and he hath given us strong consolation and good hope through grace.” Let us have

patience but a little, and we shall not be capable of mourning any more: all tears shall be wiped off from our eyes, sighing and sorrow shall fly away.

This is the more deeply to be considered, and here our thoughts ought to stay the longer; because this alone without the rest, if it be rightly weighed, is sufficient for our consolation. I do not desire you should trust me, if I do not produce the most authentic witness; the Doctor of the Gentiles, the Founder of Churches, called from heaven to his apostleship, who though he was well read in human learning, yet omitting all other things, which might and are wont to be said, he strikes down immoderate grief for the loss of our friends, with this single thunderbolt: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. Or, as a great man

translates the last words, "Even so those who sleep and are commended unto him by Jesus, will God bring thither, where they shall be with Jesus."

It will not be tedious, I believe, if I present you with a large paraphrase, which that excellent person, upon such an occasion as this I am treating of, hath left in a letter of his, upon these words.^f Grotius I mean, who from hence derives the best comforts, which he sent to Mons. du Maurier, the French ambassador then at the Hague, for the loss of his very dear consort. Letters, says he, are wont to express that briefly, which familiar discourse explains more liberally. Therefore if St. Paul, after he wrote this epistle, visited again (as is believed) these Macedonian disciples, it is possible he might utter this most wholesome oracle in words more at length, and prosecute it more largely after this manner.

"My friends, whom nature begot at first, and whom the preaching of the gospel hath

^f Epist. xxvi. ad Gallos.

begot again, to the very same lot and portion with ourselves; you know that it is our duty thoroughly to bring out whatsoever remains in you of the first of these. Now your countenance, your very habit and behaviour, plainly tell me that you are afflicted in your minds, both long and grievously, if any of your dear relations be snatched from you. Your ancestors you saw used to be thus miserably troubled, and you see those among whom you live still indulge the like grief. Great is the power of vice, when the authority of parents commend it. Great is the contagion of diseases, which have rooted themselves not in single persons, but in whole nations. But you ought to remember to what discipline you have given your names; when the washing of your bodies, figured the purity of your minds. You promised then that you would renounce the world. Peace with God, I told you, was not to be obtained on lower terms. We have opinions, we have rites also, which sever us from the world, and make another portion of

mankind. We do not so much as give the same name to things, that others do. Those, who they say are dead, we say are gone to sleep. So He taught us to speak, who was the most excellent Master, not only of living but of speaking too.

“What is the meaning of this new language? The Greek poets and philosophers called sleep, the image of death. But the resemblance doth not hold among them, which with us is most exact. We understand life, by motion and action: which the body wants when it lies as if it were buried in sleep. But when the night is gone, and the day shines, that vigour which was not lost but intermitted, returns again. And the mind in the mean season, performing those offices which it can do without the body, connects and joins together the ends of both those times, by the perpetuity of its action. Just so, when the end of this mortal life comes, the body lies stupid and idle, whether it still retain the form it had before, or be dissolved into its

elements. But wait till the great day break, and then that will appear to have only rested for a time, which seemed to have perished. And all that while, that part which is not seen, kept possession of life for the whole man.

“Compare with this faith, that which the rest of the wandering world imagines. While they differ in the most and greatest things, they all, in a manner, agree in this; that they despair of seeing the body return to life, and therefore give away immortality from man. For man is an animated body; not a mind without a body, no more than a body without a mind. Many of them think that the mind itself, when it leaves the body, is either reduced to nothing, or at least doth not retain the state of its proper substance. And so, with them, the whole man is destroyed, without hope of restitution: as appears from those very consolations which they are wont to give to those that mourn. For they say, it is true, the dead are sensible of no pleasure; but then they feel no pain. And though this be bad


enough, yet the opinions of those who make the mind to survive the body, are still worse. For the infernal regions (that is, the common place, as they will have it, of minds that leave the body) they paint as if they were some desolate wilderness, as dark as pitch, and in short, with so dismal a face, that there is no body but would willingly escape them with another death. And which is worst of all, those to whom they remit all other punishments, they describe as perpetually possessed with an endless but vain desire of returning hither to live again. And if there be any of them (which are but few) that have any better guesses, they are doubtful and wavering, more like to men that wish than those that affirm.

“But as for you, brethren, you have learnt this among the very first elements, (in the A, B, C, as we speak) of your religion, that souls departed remain in life, and that the body shall return to it. The top of our wishes is the principal thing in the form of our initiation. When you were asked whether

you believed the resurrection of the body and eternal life, you all answered, in the presence of God and his people, that you believed it. I argue with you from this form ; to which it is not sufficient to give a slight assent. This persuasion ought to root itself in your minds ; that it may bring forth ripe, fair, and durable fruit. To which an attentive consideration of the arguments which moved you to subscribe this belief will contribute very much. We did not entice you with the ornaments of speech, nor did we cast a mist before ruder minds by a heap or long train of consequences. But we brought the business to that which is common to men and women, learned and ignorant, young and old, and is thought by all to be most certain, I mean the judgment of sense. One of the greatest inquirers into nature among the Greeks, assigns this cause why many things are unknown and cannot be found out ; because we cannot see them with our eyes, nor feel them with our hands, which is the most sure way for faith to enter into our

mind. But God hath no longer left men this excuse for unbelief: having set before your eyes and thrust into our hands, an undoubted example and pledge of the thing for which we hope.

“ Jesus Christ, the author of our faith, was nailed to a cross, in the sight of the city of Jerusalem, and there remained till he was dead. The senate beheld this spectacle, and so did the band of Roman soldiers, together with a vast multitude of strangers. Who knew likewise that he was buried and lay in his grave two nights and the day between; as was evident from the testimony of their seal, and of the watch which they set to guard his tomb. In this we and our enemies are agreed: there is no difference, thus far, between us. And yet this very Jesus thus dead and buried, was seen alive again after that time by certain women of our company; and by his familiars also, both severally and all the eleven together; who did not see him only once neither; and there were those who felt his hands and his



sides. And that there might not want any thing to the full assurance of faith, he both shewed himself and spake also to five hundred witnesses together; the greatest part of which are alive and still testify this. And, as for myself, I saw him shining in a divine majesty; nor was I converted by any body but himself; who made me change my side, and come over and swear allegiance to him, against whom I had expressed the most poisonous hatred.

“Is there any one that doubts after all this? There is no equal judge sure that dares reject so many witnesses, of unblamable life, who get nothing by telling a lie. We are so far from making any gain of this testimony, that it costs us the loss of all those things, for which men are tempted to lie. For this cause we incur the hatreds even of our nearest kindred, we are despoiled of our goods, banished our country, and are in hazard of our life every day. No man will be at this charge to deceive another.

“But if our testimony be received, it is

apparent, from the most evident example, that God can restore a dead body to life again. And that this shall really be the happiness of all those that follow the institutes of Christ, is apparent from the same argument; if we do but believe, what many thousands heard, that Christ hath promised it. For the resurrection of our body, Christ hath given his testimony; and to Christ, his own resurrection testifies. For the equity of God would not suffer such an honour to be done to any, but him that told the truth; especially when he himself, before the event, had given this as a sign and a proof that he spake nothing but the truth.

“ Believe us therefore that Christ is made alive again; and believe Christ also, that they who expire in his religion shall again be made alive likewise, unto an immortal blessedness and a blessed immortality. He himself will present us to his Father, who once obtained of him this privilege, that he shall ask nothing in vain. He shall introduce us, partakers of his honour, into those places of undisturbed

peace; where no diseases can approach the body, nor vices find a passage to the soul; where there will be a life without fear of death, and joy without mixture of grief. Those pious Christian souls who are gone away from us have already a taste of this feast; in the sweetest tranquillity expecting the accomplishment of their felicity, in conjunction with their bodies. He that heartily believes these things will be so far from grieving overmuch, that he will not be able to refrain from rejoicing with those whom he hath sent before, to the place where all wish to be. For to him who rightly weighs things, they are not dead, but now at last have ceased to die.

“This place of St. Paul hath drawn me further than I intended, while I endeavoured to examine every word of it, and the force of those words. For I am certain there can be no better remedy found for grief, than this, which that great physician of souls, among the immense treasures of wholesome wisdom, brought down from heaven to us. And yet

how many things have I omitted, which might be drawn from the same fountain? But these may suffice if we drink them very greedily; so that they run into the very bowels and every corner of our souls. That will be a great deal better employment to imbibe these heavenly truths into our hearts, than to let them steep in tears, and still be finding out new causes why we should lament. Why cannot we as well be mustering up the causes of our comfort, and place this in the head of them, (which our Lord hath expressed in few words,) "because I live, ye shall live also?"^g In this we shall rest satisfied, if we do not abandon ourselves to such an immoderate passion, as will not let us understand the divinest reason.

^g John xiv 19.



SECTION IX.

THE CONCLUSION; WHICH CONTAINS AN ADVICE
TO THOSE THAT ARE IN LOVE WITH SOR-
ROW; AND AN ADVICE FOR THE REAPING
PROFIT BY THIS BOOK; AND A BRIEF RECA-
PITULATION OF THE CHIEF MATTERS IN IT.

REMEMBER, then, I beseech you, whosoever you are that cast your eyes on these lines, what I said at the beginning. Take heed you do not indulge yourselves in your tears. *Est enim et dolendi quædam ambitio*, for there is a certain ambition even in mourning, and men think that they shall be the better thought of for their grief. But assure yourselves, that if we study to exceed one another in grief, it is but just with God that we should never want misery enough, seeing we are so ambitious of it. If we will mourn immoderately, when he would have us to be patient, we shall not keep ourselves patient, when perhaps there is little

or no cause to mourn. When the air is disposed to rain, it is a long time before we can recover fair weather; and every little cloud will fall a weeping, which at another time would have been dry and barren. And just so it is with those that strive to gather as many clouds as they can to overcast them, and make them sad. It is so long before they can disperse them all, that every little thing renews their grief; as if a cheerful day should never shine upon them more.


It was a very handsome device that one of the ancient philosophers used to comfort Arsinoe, when he observed her to weep immoderately for her son's death. Let me intreat you, said he, to lend me your patience till I tell you this story:—On a time Jupiter conferred honour upon all the lesser gods or divine powers, and there was none of them wanting but only Sorrow. When all the rest were gone away rejoicing, she came and begged some honour also with many tears and entreaties. Jupiter having conferred all honours

that were worth any thing upon the other heavenly powers, he granted to her all that which men bestow upon their dead friends, (viz. grief and tears) as best befitting her quality. Now all these little deities (said this wise man) do love those most that love and honour them, and so doth Sorrow also. They bestow most of their gifts on their votaries, and those that pay them constant services, and they care not for those that observe none of their ceremonies. If you, therefore, bestow no honour upon Sorrow, then she will not love you, nor come to you; but if you studiously seek how to please her, and honour her by tears and lamentations, and all such sad things that are the offices wherein she delights, she will be in love with you, and you shall never want her company, nor be without occasions of doing continual honour to her. She will be continually supplying thee with tears to pour upon her altar, and filling thee with sighs, which are the incense which she loves thou shouldest evaporate toward

heaven. By this art the wise man stayed her tears; for she knew that he meant, that if we give way to grief, we shall never want it; and much more, if we seek for arguments to aggravate it, it will stick so fast unto us, that it will never forsake us. Though love and respect to our friends, and the natural affection which distinguish us from beasts, do allow and require moderate sorrow and sadness of our spirit, yet an intemperate grief and afflicting of our souls is unreasonable, for it doth them no good; and it is unnatural, for it doth both our body and mind abundance of harm; and, let me add likewise, that it is unchristian, and argues that we have little hope in God, either for ourselves or others. God hath done us the honour to make us priests unto himself; and you know it was the law for the priests, that none of them should mourn for a dead friend, unless he was of their nearest kindred. And therefore, let us take heed how we make ourselves unclean for the dead, by weeping so, that we should unfit ourselves for any Chris-

tian service, which God hath appointed us for our constant employment. Can you mourn, and praise God too? Can you pour out your souls to God, while you pour out these tears of grief? Can you pray in faith for other things, and not be able to believe that you can live without a friend? Can you read seriously, when your eyes are sore with the sharpness of your sorrow? Can you meditate of heavenly things, while your thoughts are filled with the images of such doleful objects? If not, know that you defile your priesthood, and that you must instantly cleanse yourselves, that you may be fit continually to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God.

And for a conclusion of this discourse, remember what I said in the former treatise, that you must lay these foundations and grounds of comfort within yourselves, or else you will always be troubled. It is something within us that must satisfy our minds, and not the enjoyment of any outward good; and therefore, we must work these principles into



our hearts, for even they, if they be without us, will not profit. We either think it is the thing we want which will cure us, when as it is without us, or else that we have reasons enough to comfort us, when as, alas! we want them also, because we let them lie without us, and have them not in our minds. We have more ways than one to abuse and deceive ourselves. At first we think that if we had what our hearts desire at this present, we should never be disquieted. And when by reason and experience we find it otherwise, then we make a great many good principles upon which to rest our souls, but they are at a great distance also from our hearts; and when we should use them, they are none of our own no more than any thing in this world.

Let these two things, then, settle themselves in our minds, which will lead us into the right way of fortifying our souls both against this and all other trouble. First, Never think that the things which thou wantest will cure thee; for they will rather

make the wound wider, and enlarge thy wants. The more we have, the more we desire still to have ; and the way to think we have enough, is not to desire to have too much. It is very well observed by Plutarch,^e that it seems to us as if our clothes did give us heat, when as they are cold of themselves, and in a great heat we shift our clothes to make us cool. Just so do men think, that the things without them will afford them content ; and that if they had a sumptuous house, and had riches at command, and were encompassed with servants, and had their friends to bear them company, they should live most sweetly and deliciously ; when as experience teaches us, that we are still desirous of some change in one thing or other about us. It is the heat of our own bodies that keeps us warm, which our clothes do only contain and keep in, that it may not fly abroad, and disperse in the air ; and so is it the liveliness and strength of our own spirit that must make us live merrily, and which

^e Περὶ ἀρετῆς.

gives all the pleasure and grace to these outward things which minister to our comfort. They can only help to maintain and increase our delights ; but our delight must arise from a more certain cause within ourselves. Add one heap of riches to another, build great houses, invite to thyself friends and lovers ; unless thou dost free thyself from thy own desires, unless thou dost put an end to thy fears and cares, and such like things, thou dost but like him that administers wine to a man in a fever, or honey to a choleric person, or meat to him that is troubled with the cholic ; which do not strengthen, but destroy them. The less we have, the better it is, unless we desire but a little. And therefore it is of absolute necessity, that we form to ourselves such strong principles as will moderate our desires, and make them reasonable. But then let me tell you, in the second place, that a good book, and a treatise of the principles of contentment, may be without us, as well as any thing else. We think that we have good reasons of being

quiet which will comfort us upon all occasions. But where are they? In our book? This is no more ours, than our money that bought it, unless the book be in our heart. We must labour to write these truths on our souls, and turn them into the reason of our minds. Things of faith we must make as if they were things of reason; and things of reason we must make as sensible as if they beat continually upon our eyes and ears. Let us colour and die our souls with these notions, or else they will do us but little good. If this book lie by us, and not in us, it will be little better than waste paper. Ἄλλο γὰρ ἐστὶν ὡς εἰς ταμείον, &c. saith Epictetus.^f For it is one thing to have bread and wine in a cupboard, and another thing to have them in our body. When they are eaten and drunk, they turn into flesh and blood, and make us lusty and strong; but when they lie by us, we think indeed we have them, but they afford us no nourishment or refreshment at all. Even so it is in these

^f Arrian. 1. ii. cap. 9.

things; if we inwardly digest them, and turn them (as it were) into the substance of our souls, they will make us of a lively complexion; but else we may be pale with fear, and pine away with grief; and it is not their fault, but our own. And as he that doth not eat when he should, may have no stomach when he is weak, but presently vomit up his food again, so he that minds not these things till he be sick of his troubles, and in great need of comfort, will find his soul, it is most likely very impatient of the remedy, and it will be a trouble to him but to read that which will quiet him.

Thus, I observe, it was with a very great man, a person endowed with an extraordinary measure of wisdom; who rejected himself in a time of sorrow, all those counsels that he had skilfully administered to others; Julius Scaliger, I mean, who, writing to a friend of his to comfort her in her mourning, beseeches her to remember how far it is from common prudence, “Not to lay down that grief for our

own sake, which we have taken up for the sake of another ; and that it is not the part of a sound judgment to accuse the fates as if they had done us wrong, and to take a severe punishment for it upon ourselves. Consider, also, where is that person we weep for ? If in heaven, what need is there of our howlings ? If in misery, why do we add loss to loss, evil to evil, and because he is miserable against our will, make ourselves freely and willingly miserable ? But this, above all things, I would have you keep in mind, that you have nothing, which you have not received ; and therefore you owe thanks, even now, for what you had, to him from whom you received it ; and ought not to reproach him for calling home his own. For all the benefits bestowed on mortals are like all things here, frail, withering, and cannot last for ever ; nay, unsteady, inconstant, and never equal. If, therefore, we enjoy any of them, we must place it among our felicities, that we were owners of it. And when by the severe laws of the uni-

verse it is snatched from us. we must refresh ourselves with the remembrance of it, as if it were present, and not vex and torment ourselves, because of its absence." ^g Many things like to these, and perhaps better, he saith he could suggest, if he thought it needful. And yet this very counsellor, I observe, when his turn came to weep, was strangely overcome with sorrow, for the death of a little son of his; but a child of great hopes. He cries out lamentably, and bewails himself without measure, saying, *In illo vivebam, in illo interii.*^h "I lived in him, and in him I died. I know he is happy, and therefore I do not bewail him in myself, but myself in him; by whose fall I am fallen also. I say I bewail myself, who die a new kind of way, and am killed by another's death." And then, reckoning up the arguments whereby his friends studied to comfort him (the very same wherewith he thought he could comfort others) he despises them all,

^g Epist. lxvii. ad Marg. Vitelliam.

^h Oratio in luctu Audecti filii.

as not worth a straw ; telling them, that they expressed, indeed, a great deal of humanity to him, but not much wisdom. For his loss was so incomparable, that there was no hope he should ever cease to lament it. In this I believe he found himself happily mistaken ; for time, which ends all things, will end our grief, though we strive never so obstinately to hinder it. His proceeding is slow, as one speaks, but the effect is infallible. But we may learn by such examples as this the necessity of concocting our own thoughts, and settling ourselves upon our own rules and prescriptions. Otherwise we shall be in danger (as he pathetically expresses his misery) to celebrate the obsequies of our friends in a sadder manner than the heathen did. For they sacrificed to their ghosts only with the blood of beasts ; but we shall offer up to their memory all our counsels, and be at the charge of losing our very reason.

Meditate, therefore, seriously of what hath been said. Think that you are not losers by

your friends' gains, and that there is no reason to be sorrowful when they are filled with joy. We love ourselves, indeed, better than we do them, and are troubled at our own loss, not at theirs; but then, if the loss be our own, we can tell better how to repair it. This is our comfort; that it is in our own hands to ease ourselves, if we be the cause of our own trouble. Consider often that it is as natural to die as it is to be born; that God gives us every thing upon this condition, that we should be content to give it up again when he pleases to call for it; that God is a loving father, and doeth every thing for the best; that he would have us love him more, when he leaves us nothing else to love; that nothing can be dismally sad, which by his grace and our care may be turned into joy; that we ought to turn our sorrow into care, lest there be something worse to sorrow for, even the sin of our immoderate sorrow; that we ought to live so, that we may comfort ourselves with hope we shall see our friends again that die in the Lord;

that seeing we must die too, and others must weep for us, by our life we must leave them something to comfort them, in hope that we are better, than if we were with them. We must often consider how much of our grief depends on mere fancy, and not on things. We were perhaps at a great distance from our friends while they lived, and did but seldom see them. The case is not much altered now that they are dead. If we have sustained a loss, we do but double it by losing our own quiet and comfort also. And yet there is more cause of thankfulness than of repining; both that we had them so long, and also that God hath taken away only them. Our grief at last must cease; and that which will end it then, may end it now. Or, if it must end itself by its own weariness, it is a shame that religious reason cannot do more than mere length of time can do. It is but as we ourselves would have it, who would have been loath to have died first. Or else it is as they would have it, who would have been loath

to have outlived us, and been so sad as we make it necessary to be. They are not quite gone away, but only gone before. And by sorrow we may tread too fast upon their heels. Let us henceforth place our chiefest comfort in God ; for if one be taken away, then so may another. There will be every day new matter of trouble ; and unless we be better provided against it, we shall be every day miserable. This world is the place of sorrow ; and therefore, seeing there are things enough to trouble us, let it not be our work to create trouble to ourselves. Trouble is a thing that will come without our call ; but true joy will not spring up without ourselves. If any sorrow should oppress us, it must be for our sins. And when we mourn for them, let us be sorrowful we were no more thankful for such enjoyments as we have now lost. Let these tears also teach us to take off our affections from worldly things ; all the pleasure of whose possession is scarce big enough to compensate the trouble of parting with them. And, above

all, remember that Jesus died and entered into the grave, as well as we ; and that by his resurrection he hath opened the gate to immortal life, and is in glory at God's right hand ; and expects your coming thither where he is, out of this calamitous place ; and that, in the mean time, you should not disparage your hope in him, by impatience under the loss of any other thing. And then your wisdom to distinguish the value of this world from the next ; and your religious fear to offend your merciful Father, and lose his blessing, by repining at what he doeth ; will undoubtedly preserve you from all inordinate and undutiful sorrow, be the cause of it never so great.

Especially if you consider (as the great person I mentioned before discourses), that God takes care of all things ; though not of all alike, because they are not all alike.^b The degrees of Providence are according to the degrees of things. He governs the affairs of beasts more loosely, those of men more strictly.

^b Grotius epist. xxvi. ad Gallos.

“And among mankind he vouchsafes to take a special care of kings and princes; as terrestrial stars, from whom the tempest of war, or the serenity of peace, flows down upon the people. But that supreme goodness holds nothing so dear, as those that are in earnest good Christians. He will have kingdoms themselves serve their uses. He ordains nothing in which he hath not a particular respect to them. So that those things are for them which seem against them. That is an immoveable decree, that all things shall turn to the good of those who truly love God. Nor let it seem strange if he do not treat them delicately, but keep them under discipline. Even this is part of his fatherly care. For he either purges them by sharp medicines, which prick the bowels, if in the crowd they have caught some infection; or, he antidotes them by some wholesome, but bitter preservative, before a disease seize on them; or the soldier of God must be proved, that he, that others may see how he hath profited. Virtue is tried by dif-

ficulties; God always exacts such pains from the pious; and the greater from Christians, who from the very banner of the cross ought to understand their obligations. Their captains struggling through all manner of troubles, dedicated this way to heaven. Why should not we courageously engage in the same warfare; being so sure of a noble reward if we overcome, and so sure to overcome if we do but fight? For he that is our rewarder, is our helper. He holds forth a crown to us, and he furnishes us with weapons. He exposes none to the conflict, but whom he knows able to endure it, or whom he will make able. He can no more deny the help of his heavenly inspirations, to those that heartily ask them, than a kind and rich father can deny bread to his hungry child. How many philosophers, how many of the lower sort in former times subdued grief with less help? And shall we who neither want the use of reason, nor the example of former times, and besides are sure of that peculiar mighty succour from above, turn our backs to any though great calamity?"

We shall never sure be guilty of such base cowardice ; especially if in this (when grief for the loss of our friends assaults us) we can add to all other comforts, this good hope ; that the “Soul of him or her who upon so many accounts was most dear to us, hath begun to reap the sweetest fruits of its virtue, and to taste the promised reward of sincere piety. The last period of so many ages, which shall restore the whole of us to ourselves, that immense heap of good things far beyond all we can think, all we can wish, doth not now appear to such a soul as it doth to us, a great way off, but near at hand, and just before its eyes. That which it hath now is so great, that it wants nothing ; and yet that is much greater which it sees it shall have. And do not say, but it might have come later thither.” That person receives more, who in time receives more ; it is a great happiness to be happy quickly.



1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

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